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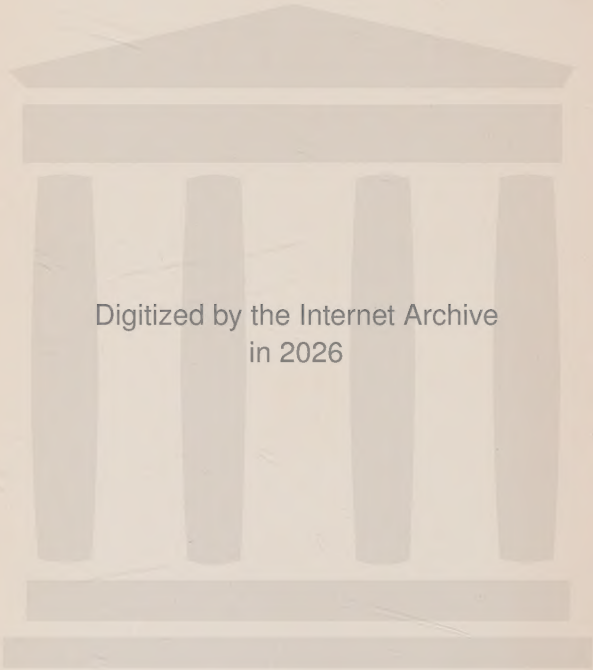
THE NEW MIDWEEK SERVICE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THE NEW MIDWEEK SERVICE

BY
EDMUND E. PRESCOTT

NASHVILLE, TENN.
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1929

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To
My Wife

7143

FOREWORD

THE chapters of this book are the substance of addresses that have been delivered at the following Summer Schools of Theology: Simpson College, Indianola, Ia.; Hamline University, St. Paul, Minn.; Iowa Wesleyan College, Mount Pleasant, Ia.; DePauw University, Greencastle, Ind.; Lawrence College, Appleton, Wis.; Nebraska Wesleyan University, University Place, Neb.; and Baker University, Baldwin, Kans.

At the urgent request of many pastors that these addresses be put in permanent form where they would be accessible for study and practical use, they are here presented.

I am greatly indebted to the pastors and laymen who, most willingly, have contributed the interesting letters on the "Midweek Service" found in chapter eleven of this book; to the Rev. Robert Leonard Tucker, the Rev. Roy L. Smith, and the Rev. Louis F. W. Lesemann for their kindness in reading the manuscript and for their many valuable suggestions; and to my wife, without whose encouragement and aid this work could never have been accomplished.

E. E. P.

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	The Changing Prayer Meeting	11
II.	The Value of the Prayer Service	14
III.	The Prayer Meeting Problem	17
IV.	The New Midweek Plan	21
V.	Church Nights	25
VI.	Community Night	45
VII.	The Church Forum	49
VIII.	Bible Study	65
IX.	Bible Study (Continued)	73
X.	New Midweek Programs	81
XI.	Letters from Prominent Pastors	98
	Bibliography	119

CHAPTER I

THE CHANGING PRAYER MEETING

THE prayer meeting has been the center of Church devotions for generations. In former years, nearly every Christian Church had its midweek service where Christian people gathered, from week to week, to fellowship with one another and with God. The home had its family altar where the Bible was daily read and prayers offered. Children, also, were taught to pray at mother's knee. Prayer, in those days, was considered an essential part of a man's devotion and Christian experience.

In the old days men loved to pray. Voluntary prayers were offered in the public meetings. When entering a church for a religious service, people bowed their heads, for a moment, in silent prayer. During "revivals" men and women would often gather in their respective homes "for prayer," invoking God's blessing upon these special services. It was an established custom for a pastor to offer prayer when making his pastoral visits. Even laymen were called upon to pray at the bedside of a dying friend.

To-day, we stand at the crossroads of civilization. An uncertain future awaits us. Restlessness is manifest everywhere. The home is undergoing great changes. Ideals are crumbling and responsibilities shifting. Great social changes are apparent.

The Church is also in a state of transition. Her methods and her emphasis are changing. Old forms

are dying out, and new ones are coming forward to take their place. The old types of evangelism are passing. The Methodist "class meeting" has gone. The "old-fashioned" prayer meeting, with its prayers and testimonies, has disappeared.

A new program is necessary to replace these fast disappearing forms in our Church. The primary purpose of this study is to show how this change from the "old" to the "new" may take place in regard to the prayer meeting and to suggest a new program to meet the present need.

The old-type prayer meeting no longer has its appeal. Many churches have dispensed with it altogether, while others have resorted to new plans and programs in an effort to revive and maintain the midweek service. No Christian pastor or congregation questions the value or place of the midweek meeting in the Church program. The people of the Church, as a whole, are anxious that it should be maintained, but they do not feel any personal obligation in regard to attendance.

The midweek service, properly conducted, is one of the most helpful services of the Church. Its usefulness is amazing; its resources unlimited; its possibilities infinite. It will reclaim indifferent Church members; it will deepen the lives of those who attend its services; it will quicken the whole Church into action.

The midweek service of to-day must be made popular and interesting. While preserving the devotional character of the old service, it must still conform to the spirit of the new age—freedom of speech and expression. Prayers and testimonies, for the most part,

may be expressed in a new way; also, novel and wholesome features of the meeting should be made interesting and striking in appeal.

Christian people, generally, will attend a midweek meeting that has an attractive, interesting, and instructive program. Many city Churches have outstanding midweek gatherings where hundreds of folks meet in Christian fellowship and worship.

Some years ago the writer was sent to a Church in a small town as its pastor where no midweek service had been held for a number of years. A small group of people were called together to consider the advisability of a midweek program. The new plans, as outlined in this text, were discussed; the group pledged their support; and a program was launched. Twelve persons were present for the first meeting, twenty-five for the second; and after a few weeks the problem of attendance was solved. During a period of three years there was an average of twenty per cent of the membership of the Church in attendance at these midweek services. In an open country church, on the same pastoral charge, a monthly "Community Program" was held for three consecutive years, with an average attendance of more than one hundred.

CHAPTER II

THE VALUE OF THE PRAYER SERVICE

THE prayer meeting should occupy an important place in the curriculum of the Church. In the past it has been, primarily, a gathering of Christian people for prayer and testimony; but, in reality, the prayer meeting is more than this. It is a gathering for the instruction of Christian people in the principles of Christian living. It is one of the highly important departments of the Church for the development of Christian life and character. It is a source of spiritual strength and of power to the Church itself.

1. *It teaches democracy.* The prayer meeting is the most democratic service of the Church. It is here that the people have an opportunity to express their faith freely in prayer and testimony. The prayer meeting is the *one service* of the Church where differences are forgotten and barriers removed. It is the best means of providing Christian fellowship among worshipers and for stimulating the Christian ideals of life.

2. *It fosters spiritual life.* The prayer meeting should foster the spiritual life of the Church. In former days the Church sought to preserve the devotional spirit through the "class meeting" and the "old-fashioned" prayer meeting. But to-day we are in danger of being dominated almost wholly by the material: "Magnificent church buildings, generous givings, increased pastoral support, organized drives

which, while worthy in themselves, profit us little if the spiritual power of the Church is wanting." To cultivate and promote the spiritual side of Church life is the supreme need. The prayer meeting is the logical place for the development of this Christian spirit.

3. *It creates Christian fellowship.* Christian people should come together for fellowship from time to time. The midweek service offers such an opportunity. This period for fellowship should be provided for at every midweek meeting.

4. *It perpetuates the family altar.* The family is the oldest institution of man. It is not only the oldest, but also the greatest institution of mankind. The family is the original source of authority, of government, and religion. It has been said that the strength of the home is the strength of the nation. It has also been shown by statistics that the most eminent men and women of a nation have spent their childhood in a religious environment. The influence of Christian teaching in the home is sure to reveal itself, in after years, in the lives of the children of the home. Roger Babson says that the prosperity of this nation is largely due to the family prayers which were once daily held in the homes of our fathers. Family prayers nurture and develop spiritual resources and build character upon which the prosperity of the nation stands. The splendid custom of family worship should be revived and maintained. The prayer meeting is one of the important means for the encouragement of family devotions.

5. *It stimulates Bible study.* An important aim of the midweek service should be to stimulate definite

Bible study. The first recorded prayer meeting of the early Church held in Jerusalem bears testimony to the fact that the disciples were familiar with the Scriptures (Acts 4: 24–28). People enjoy the study of the Bible when it is presented to them in a clear, concise, and interesting way. Woodrow Wilson said that in his youth nothing gave him better instruction or stimulated him more to high thought and action than the careful and interesting exposition of the Scriptures, given by his father, at the midweek service of the Church where his father served as pastor. Definite and constructive Bible study in the midweek meetings should always be encouraged.

6. *It promotes evangelism.* Prayer and prayer gatherings are indispensable to evangelism. Revivals are born in prayer meetings. They are not man-made, but sent from God in answer to prayer. Every evangelist recognizes the importance of the "cottage prayer meeting" before and during the evangelistic campaign. The success of protracted meetings also depends upon the amount of prayer that accompanies them. The great revival of 1859, which began in Ireland and spread throughout Scotland and England, had its origin in an old-fashioned prayer meeting held in a schoolhouse.

All leading churchmen recognize that the midweek service fills a very important place in the life of the Church. It has been said that the attendance at the Sunday morning service indicates the loyalty of the Church membership; the Sunday evening service the popularity of the minister; the Wednesday evening meeting the Church's devotion to God. The prayer meeting is essential to the spiritual life of the Church.

CHAPTER III

THE PRAYER MEETING PROBLEM

Both the ministry and the laity of the Church are agreed that the prayer meeting presents a problem. Many books have been written on the subject. Various magazines have also published helpful plans and programs, from time to time, to assist in the solution of the prayer meeting problem. These publications are timely and worth while; however, the solution of the prayer meeting is dependent largely upon the personal effort of the pastor and his Church members.

The prayer meeting problem is threefold; that of leadership, of program, and of attendance.

1. *The Problem of Leadership.* The most important problem is that of leadership. Too often the pastor is blamed for every failure of the Church. Though this may seem unfair, still there is some justice in placing the blame of a poor midweek service upon the leader. He is chiefly responsible for the meeting. Every pastor desires the best midweek service possible. His real difficulty is that he does not put the same amount of work on the preparation for this as for the other services of the week. Yet every pastor is just as responsible for the midweek meeting as he is for the Sunday services. The fact is, most pastors do not make sufficient preparation for the prayer meeting. They wait until an hour or so before the time to begin and then select some easy topic that can be discussed without effort, expecting that when the subject is thrown open to the meeting for

discussion it will gather enough momentum to keep it in motion until the close. This kind of preparation does not build up a midweek service.

The pastor is without question the best one to direct the prayer meeting. He is the logical leader. He alone understands the problems of the field. He knows his people and usually understands their needs. As a rule, no laymen will take the time for preparation that a pastor will or should take. Moody said that where one pastor fails in the pulpit fifty fail in the prayer meeting. The midweek meeting is a service of high importance. It requires much thought and labor.

2. *The Problem of the Program.* The second problem of the prayer meeting is its program. A well worked out program is as essential to the success of a mid-week service as a good leader. Too many of our prayer meetings have a familiar sameness about them. Everyone knows just how the meeting will begin and how it will proceed until the last word is said. A change seldom occurs in the order of service. The same number of hymns are sung with continual repetition; the same number of prayers are given by the same people; the same number of persons testify in the same set way. There is nothing new to awaken interest. Few are able to express themselves intelligently on any subject without due thought and preparation. In the old-time prayer meeting no one knew what the topic for discussion would be until it was announced. Consequently no preparation was made, but each one spoke, on the moment, from any angle or in any way that came to mind. Thus various topics were brought forward at random—the subject taking almost any turn at any time.

People to-day demand a live program. They are interested in things that relate to life and morals, to public issues, and to practical Christianity. They are eager to express themselves on vital issues. A dull, dry, or unprepared service is awkward and embarrassing.

3. *The Problem of Attendance.* The third problem of the midweek service is that of attendance. Often the prayer meeting is the poorest attended service of the Church. There are usually a few folks in every Church who are always present at the midweek prayer meeting, but the mass of the people have no place for midweek devotions in their program.

The question is often raised, "Is it worth while to maintain a midweek service when the number is small?" The appearance of small numbers in the prayer meeting reflects upon the Church. Also, with a meager number the midweek meeting fails to meet its desired ends. It may be wise under some circumstances to close the service should the prayer meeting attendance continue small and dwindling. It might be well to close the prayer meeting in the late spring when the numbers begin to fall off, pointing to a low average for the summer months. People will be more eager to return in the fall to resume services by this method than with the long-drawn-out term with failing numbers. Catering to the desires of a "faithful few" and dragging out the prayer meeting for the summer months will often react adversely the following autumn and winter.

By good leadership and an attractive program any Church may build up a successful midweek service.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEW MIDWEEK PLAN

ALTHOUGH the old-fashioned prayer meeting will always hold a cherished place in the hearts and memories of Christian people, yet its power has waned, and a new service is being brought forward to take its place. This is what we should expect. It is true in every other walk of life—the "new" replacing the "old." We have seen this change in the pulpit, in the Sabbath school, and in the social program of the Church. We are now facing this problem of change in our present-day prayer service.

1. *The Name.* The present-day prayer meeting is not a service primarily for prayer, as typified by its name. It is, rather, a gathering for Christian fellowship and growth. People have become indifferent to the name "prayer meeting" because it calls to mind a weak struggling service, poorly attended, and no longer appeals to them. For the success of the midweek service a new name should be adopted. This name should have a correspondence to the nature of the service as, Family Night, Church Night, or Church-Training Night. Coin a new name or make some change in the old, if you wish to stress the midweek service. Midweek Meeting, Midweek Service, Midweek Devotions, Fellowship Night are new terms that may be used with good effect.

2. *The Leader.* It is a grave mistake for any pastor to surrender his leadership of the midweek service to

the people during the hour of devotion with such remarks as, "now the service is yours," or "the meeting is now open." The pastor should lead or direct his own meeting.

3. *The Publicity.* Much of the success of the midweek service will depend on the amount of publicity that is given to it. Advertisement by sane and sensible methods is indispensable to the success of the meeting.

Use the people of the Church to help advertise the midweek service. A good plan is to divide the field into districts, placing a good leader over each. Small towns are usually divided by the main street, the railroad, the river, or the city wards. Each leader is made responsible for those in his or her respective territory. These leaders are expected to make use of the telephone or the post card, or are asked to make personal visits, extending personal invitations to the people in their respective groups.

"Post card advertising" is most successful in the small community. People feel honored to have a personally written invitation to attend any Church service. They will look forward with interest to these announcements. The post card invitations, sent regularly, tend to prevent a falling off in attendance at the midweek service.

Talk up the midweek service among the people. Refer to the service or some interesting feature of it when making your pastoral visits. Honor it from the pulpit. If you use a Church paper, have a space reserved in it for this item. Announce the service with its subject in the local paper. Pledge the attendance

of your Church officials and Sunday school officers and teachers for a definite number of meetings.

4. *The Time.* There are three rules to observe in regard to time: "Begin on time, keep to time, close on time." Never hold the midweek service, as such, longer than an hour. Many meetings have been ruined by keeping people too long. Plan the service so that there will not be too much time given to any one part of the evening program. Make a schedule for the midweek service, then keep to your schedule.

5. *The Attendance.* The number attending the midweek service will be determined, to some extent, by local conditions. Leading churchmen state that the attendance at the midweek meetings should be at least ten per cent of the Church membership—if a Church has a membership of five hundred, the attendance at the service should be fifty or more. The Church Night attendance should average not less than twenty-five per cent of the Church membership.

6. *The Program.* The first essential for the success of the new midweek program is "variety." Something new, unexpected, or different always holds the interest and brings a ready response. The second essential for the success of the new midweek program is "modernizing" it. The spirit of the old-fashioned meeting is still retained. Prayer is never lost sight of, and testimonies are encouraged. But the program itself is revised and made new. The aim is to make the whole service so attractive and interesting that people will be drawn to it and find strength and help in their Christian life.

7. *New Methods.* New methods are made use of in

the New Midweek Service in regard to music, to testimony, and to prayer.

(1) The music is planned from the standpoint of its appeal to the people. New methods and ideas are introduced into the service. Vocal and instrumental talent is presented from time to time. Often the story of a hymn is told by the pastor prior to the singing of it. Stereopticon slides which picture the song story are used to make the song live in the heart and mind of the individual. Many use the illuminated cross to create the atmosphere of prayer and worship. Tableau, lighting effects, or echo singing are also introduced with good effect to make the song service one of inspiration and help.

(2) Many Christian people hesitate to relate their Christian experience, but are willing rather to tell what they desire to do for the cause of Christ, the Church, and humanity. They feel that personal testimony, at times, has a tendency to encourage hypocrisy. Because of this attitude, the old type of testimony is disappearing to a great extent, and a new and more practical type has developed. By this new form of expression Christians are edified just the same as in the old meetings of former days. Forum questions or Bible topics may be used at times by the leader as the basis of this personal testimony.

(3) It is not the purpose of the new program to dispense with public prayer. Not only is prayer conserved, but it is encouraged in such a way that prayers are offered in continually increasing numbers. By varied methods and approaches prayer is made real, interesting, and helpful. At times those who are backward about praying publicly are asked to mem-

orize several short prayers and give them in the services. By this aid prayer eventually becomes easier for them.

In order to increase the interest in the midweek service some Churches use the "forum" plan; while others use lectures, pictures, entertainments, or study interesting religious topics. Many Churches have introduced Church Night or Church-Training Night with splendid success.

Give Christian training an important place. Present a program that has an appeal and that uses variety. Stress the devotional services. Through varied approaches develop prayer and testimony. The returns will be large in interest and Christian growth among the people.

CHAPTER V

CHURCH NIGHTS

THE Church-Training Night, also called Church Night or Family Night, is a new service. It is usually held weekly in the city Churches for a period of ten to twelve weeks and once a month in the town or village Church. It is the *one service* where the Church membership and constituency are gathered together for Christian fellowship, worship, study, and recreation. Each Church usually works out its own Church-Training Night program. The following is the general order in the larger city Churches:

6: 00 to 7: 00 P.M. Fellowship supper.
7: 00 to 7: 30 P.M. Devotions.
7: 30 to 8: 15 P.M. Study Period.
8: 15 to 9: 00 P.M. Recreation.

The usual order of program for the town and village Church is:

7: 30 to 8: 00 P.M. Song and Devotional Service.
8: 00 to 8: 30 P.M. Study Period or Program.
8: 30 to 9: 30 P.M. Recreation and Refreshments.

The supper—though not an essential feature—is usually a part of the Church Night. Serving is somewhat of a problem in most Churches. In the larger places committees may be alternated from week to week to serve. The work is sometimes lessened by having a basket supper with the local Church serving one hot dish and coffee. Some prefer the cafeteria form. A few Churches omit the supper entirely.

However, under all circumstances avoid burdensome serving. Light refreshments, easily prepared, are most practical and satisfactory.

The four periods of the Church Night program—devotional, study, fellowship, and recreational—must be worked out by the pastor or a Church committee to meet the needs of the specific Church.

The purpose of the Church Night gatherings is to create Christian fellowship, to interest people in all of the Church activities, to increase attendance on the other Church services, to develop new talent, and to stimulate a Church conscience on the part of the whole Church.

The majority of the large city Churches are using the Church-Training Night with splendid results. On the following pages is a series of monthly programs which have proved highly attractive in both the smaller and larger field.

A Workers' Conference

(October)

Many Sunday schools hold a Workers' Conference, monthly, where the Sunday school officers and teachers meet to consider various problems connected with the school and to work out plans and programs relative to it. In order to obtain the best results in the mid-week service, a Workers' Conference at the beginning of the year is desirable. The Conference should be held as a business meeting. Its purpose should not be announced before the time it takes place.

Early in the fall the pastor should call together the Church officials, Sunday school officers and teachers, and any other interested members of the Church

and present to them, for their consideration, the midweek program for the year. At this meeting he also appoints his committees. The importance of the midweek service is stressed, and an effort is made to enlist all present in the work. The Church, as a whole, should approve the suggested program and endeavor to follow the plan as presented to them in this fall meeting. A Workers' Conference should be held each year.

Installation of Church Officials

(*November*)

The primary object of the Installation Service is to acquaint the official members of the Church with their duties and responsibilities, to pledge them to the loyal fulfillment of the same, and to encourage the official work in the Church by giving these members a place of honor throughout this ceremony.

The following is a suggested order of procedure for this installation. The official members of the Church stand together in the front of the room while the service is read thus: (1) The duties of the elders or trustees of the Church are, to hold in sacred trust the church and and parsonage property —. (2) The duties of the deacons or stewards of the Church are, to make ample provision for the support of the pastor and —.

In response, the members of the Church Board pledge their loyalty by answering these questions: (1) Do you believe it to be your Christian duty as an officer of the Church to —? (2) Will you, to the best of your ability, discharge the duties; as —?

The people of the Church then pledge their loyalty

and support to the officers. Prayer is offered, all standing, thus closing this special part of the evening program.

Bible Night

(*December*)

Bible Night is observed to-day in many of our Churches. The idea in connection with this service is to have an exhibit of unusual Bibles.

The people are asked to bring their "oldest" Bible, their "largest" Bible, their "smallest" Bible and various versions of Bibles to the midweek meeting. These are properly arranged on a table in the front of the room for display. A neighboring pastor is asked to speak on the theme "How We Got Our Bible." For reference read *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*, by Maurice Price, and *How We Got Our Bible*, by J. Paterson Smyth.

As a part of the devotional service, each person who has a Bible on display is asked to state some interesting item regarding his own particular volume—its age, its history, its value to him. The pastor might speak on the theme, "The Value of Different Versions of the Bible." Effectiveness may be added to the service by giving a penny Gospel to each one present and a copy of the New Testament to those who have the "oldest," "largest," and "smallest Bibles."

Young People's Night

(*January*)

The program for this night should be given by the Boy Scouts or Pioneers, the Girl Scouts or Camp Fire Girls, or by some other similar young people's organization.

For the first part of the program the boys may demonstrate their special work, and for the second part of the program the girls may demonstrate theirs. This entertainment by the young people will be more attractive if the boys and girls dress in their camping costumes.

A suggested outline for the boys' program:

Why be a Scout?
The three classes of Scouts.
The Scout's Oath, Sign, and Law.
The Scout's Organization.
What we do in Camp
Or:
The Aim of a Pioneer.
The Four-Square Life.
Games and Sports Illustrated.
Camping Experiences.
A Talk by the Leader.

For program material address the Boy Scouts of America, 2 Park Avenue, New York City; The Girl Scouts of America, 189 Lexington Avenue, New York City; or Camp Fire Girls, 313 Seventeenth Street, New York City.

Patriotic Night

(*February*)

A number of noted men and women were born in the month of February.

George Washington, William H. Harrison, Abraham Lincoln (presidents).

Copernicus, Galileo, Charles Darwin, Thomas Edison (scientists).

Josiah Quincy of Harvard, Mary Lyons of Holyoke, Alice Freeman Palmer of Wellesley (educators).

Handel, Rossini, Mendelssohn (musicians)

Melanchthon and Mather (churchmen).

Victor Hugo and Charles Dickens (novelists).

Lowell and Longfellow (poets).

Horace Greely (editor).

Peter Cooper (philanthropist).

W. T. Sherman (general).

For Patriotic Night short talks on the lives of these noted personages may be presented, stressing the contribution that each has made to posterity.

Patriotic songs, pageants, drills, or exercises may be added to give further attractiveness to the evening program.

Two outstanding books for study are: *The Life of Abraham Lincoln*, by William E. Barton, and *George Washington the Christian*, by William J. Johnson.

Family Night

(*March*)

The Family Night is one of the most interesting services of the year. On this night the families come together for fellowship and devotion. After the opening service of song, Scripture, and prayer, a record is made of those who are present; as:

The largest family.

Families where all are present.

Families where one or two are absent.

The oldest man present.

The oldest woman present.

The youngest person present.

A Bible, Testament, booklet, or other appropriate

gift may be given to each representative group or person.

The following direction or request adds to the good fellowship and pleasure of the company:

"Native Sons and Daughters" (of this State), please stand.

"Foreigners" (those born in other States), stand and name your State.

Husbands, stand and give date of wedding anniversary.

Women, stand and relate an incident of domestic life.

Other interesting ideas may be used to add to the enjoyment of Family Night.

Old Folks Night

(April)

This program may be given on the regular Church night, on a week day afternoon, or on a Sunday afternoon.

Advertise the service thoroughly. Send personal invitations to all the aged people in the community. Provide automobiles to bring the old folks. Greet the guests kindly. Have easy chairs for the more elderly. Have badges and bouquets.

Begin the program with old familiar hymns. Have a favorite passage of Scripture read. Follow this with a "reminiscence meeting" or "love feast." Have a short talk by the pastor on the theme "Sunsets of Life," or a short sermon by a retired minister. Selections honoring old age may be read or recited.

For the fellowship period enroll the names of the old people in a book provided for that purpose. Pre-

sent each guest with a bouquet to which a card with a verse of Scripture is attached, or a booklet suited to the occasion. Photograph the group. Read letters from those who are unable to attend. Serve light refreshments. Make Old Folks Night an annual affair in the church.

Father and Son Banquet

(May)

Every Church should hold a Father and Son Banquet. This occasion affords a splendid opportunity to link up the interests of the boy more closely with the parent and with the Church.

The following is a suggested program for a Father and Son Banquet:

Vocal Solo, by a young man.
Greetings, by the pastor
Response, by the toastmaster.
Reading, by a young man.
"My Best Pal," by a boy.
"When a Feller Needs a Friend," by a boy.
Teamwork, by Dad.
Music, by the Boys' Quartet.
"My Ideal Son," by Y. M. C. A. Secretary.
"My Ideal Father," by a special speaker.
Music, by the Men's Quartet.

Appropriate poems, songs or sayings, menu cards, and programs can be used.

Make the banquet an annual affair. Keep a record of those who attend. Make a special effort to get fathers and sons to unite with the Church. Organize a "Fathers' Forum Club." Organize a "Hi-Y" for the boys.

A Workers' Conference

(October) Second Year

The Workers' Conference, as related to the midweek service, is a meeting where the year's plans and program are set forth and approved by the Church. There will be a tendency on the part of the pastor who has followed the program in this study to omit the Workers' Conference the second year. This omission should not occur. The Workers' Conference is just as essential to the success of the midweek service as the Rally Day is to the promotion of new life in the Sabbath school.

The pastor should have his midweek program for the year outlined in advance. However, he should welcome any suggestions or plans offered by the members and friends of his Church. For the Workers' Conference ask the people to come prepared to answer questions; as, "What helps or plans can you suggest for the midweek service?" "What new ideas have you to offer?" The thoughtful pastor will accept as many of the suggestions as he deems best and ask those suggesting the same to coöperate with him in the carrying out of the new midweek program.

The Church Reception Night

(November)

A reception to the new folks in a community—the new teachers, new Church members, or to a pastor, usually takes place in the fall. This reception may be held in connection with the Church Night service.

Begin the program with two or three bright songs, followed with prayer by the pastor. Announce an-

other song, then have a short devotional talk of not more than fifteen minutes in length. Following the devotions have a program of music, readings, songs, and an address of welcome by some leading Church official.

Special invitations are to be sent and special honors are to be tendered to the group or groups of folks who are the occasion of this Church reception night. The topics for the talks should be appropriate to the groups honored, as:

"Why unite with the Church?"

"How may there be better coöperation between the Church and the public school?"

"What may I do to further the interests of the community?"

The program for the evening should close with some favorite hymn of fellowship.

Sunday School Installation Service

(*December*)

Few Sunday schools have Installation Services for their workers. One should be held yearly. Installation Services are inspiring and helpful to the school. The following is a suggested form of pledge and program:

"Trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for guidance and strength for the upbuilding of the kingdom of God and for the welfare of our country, we, the officers and teachers, renew our pledge of devotion and service to the —— Sunday School. We will endeavor, so far as possible, to be faithful in the performance of the duties of our respective offices."

The people respond by the following pledge:

"We the members of the —— Church and congregation, recognizing the devotion of the Sunday school teachers and officers, their splendid service in teaching the Word of God, and their value in promoting the welfare of our homes and community, do hereby pledge to them our sympathy, our coöperation and support in every way, especially in the assisting of our children in the study of the lessons and seeing to it that they are regular in attendance.

After a program of reading, music, talks, and games, refreshments are served, and a social time is enjoyed.

The Brotherhood Night

(*January*)

Suggestions: It is interesting to note how much is written in the Bible concerning government, business, and politics. The Pentateuch is a source book of justice, righteousness, and equality among men. The prophets are continually denouncing injustice, bribery, oppression, and dishonesty by the ruling classes. The writings of Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah abound in suggestive material for discussions. A study of the land problem of the Hebrews is interesting. (Lev., chap. 25).

A brief discussion of the overthrow of the feudal system and serfdom may be given. In the modern world, Russia, Italy, England, and Mexico are conspicuous examples of the "land question." Papers may be prepared on "Reforms needed in the Court," "Reforms needed in the State," "Reforms needed in the Community." Roger W. Babson's book on *Religion and Business*, or *Business and the Church*, by Jerome Davis, may be used. Read Walter Rauschen-

busch, Harry F. Ward, J. F. Montgomery, Shailer Matthews, C. R. Brown, or E. I. Earp on the Social Problem.

Women's Night

(*February*)

Women have always occupied a very interesting and important place in history. Woman's sphere has either been distinguished or servile, honorable or degraded.

The women of the Bible afford a profitable study. Miriam the poetess and musician, Deborah the judge, Esther the queen, Hager the bond-servant, Dorcas the philanthropist, and Mary the mother of Jesus are all splendid Bible characters for consideration.

Another suggested line of study is to trace the development of womanhood throughout history. In the days of Greece and Rome woman was a chattel. In India she is still a prisoner; in China a subordinate; in Japan a servant; but in Christian lands honored and exalted and on an equality with man.

A study of the lives of Florence Nightingale, Frances Willard, Alice Freeman Palmer, Edith Cavell, Jane Addams, or Evangeline Booth may also be made.

For reference read *Representative Women of the Bible*, by George Matheson, *The Woman of Tact*, by W. M. Mackey, *Heroines of Service*, by Mary E. Parkman, and *Short History of Women*, by John Langdon Davies.

Boys' and Girls' Night

(*March*)

The aim of this service is to impress upon the minds

of youth the importance of their place in the life of the Church.

The pastor should conduct the devotional service, the lesson of which should be adapted to youth. Such themes as, "The Four-Square Life" or "Playing the Game" may be used, or tell some of the stories published by the Character Building Company, Grinnell, Ia.

It is well to confine a major portion of the program to Bible Stories. The following are suggested:

The Boy Samuel, 1 Sam. 1: 19–3: 21.
The Girl Slave, 2 Kings 5: 1–7.
The Young Prince, 2 Chronicles, chaps. 22–24.
The Young King, 2 Chronicles, chap. 34.
The Boy Scout, John 6: 1–14.
The Girl Scout, Acts 12: 11–19.

Many Churches have Bible story contests. Three classes of stories are usually represented—the dramatic, the narrative, and the Bible reading. Read for reference Hurlburt's *Story of the Bible*, Foster's *Story of the Bible*, and *Tell Me a True Story*, by Mary Stewart. Have appropriate games for the closing number of the evening.

Missionary Night

(*April*)

At the Easter season new members are being received into the Church. Programs are being given with the Easter touch upon them. The whole atmosphere of the Church is such at this time that a missionary appeal finds a ready and sympathetic response.

Sometimes it is possible to secure a return mis-

sionary as the speaker for the night. It will also add to the popularity of the program if pictures are used in connection with the lecture. A "thank offering" for the Missionary Society may be taken.

When the program is projected by the local society, a pageant or a playlet may be given by the folks of the Church. Material for this can be secured at any denominational Church headquarters. A brief sketch of the lives of some of the recent missionaries might be given—C. F. Andrews, James W. Bashford, Henry T. Hodkin, E. Stanley Jones, or Watts O. Pye. Various phases of the frontier life or mission work in the city may also be presented. For the Scripture reference read Luke 10: 25–37; John 3: 16–21; and John 4: 3–26.

Stereopticon Lecture

(May)

For the last Church Night of the year have a stereopticon lecture. Good slides may be secured at the State college at a nominal price. Slides and machines may be obtained from the following supply houses:

The Minister's Supply Company, 13 Philip Street, Albany, N. Y.

The Victor Animatograph Company, 114 Victor Building, Davenport, Ia.

Underwood and Underwood, 417 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

George W. Bond Slide Company, 6 East Lake Street, Chicago, Ill.

The Standard Slide Corporation 209 West 48th Street, New York City.

The Bible Film Corporation of America, 910 Washington Building, Los Angeles, Calif.

The Christian Lantern Slide Company, Association Building, Chicago, Ill.

The Atlas Educational Film Company, 821 Market Street, San Francisco, Calif.

The Keystone View Company, Meadville, Pa.

The Pacific Stereopticon Slide Company, Los Angeles, Calif.

The New Ideal Service, Vinton, Ia.

The Denominational Missionary Boards.

TRINITY CHURCH

SPRINGFIELD, MASS.

Thursday Is Open-House Church Night 5:00 to 10:00 O'Clock
Let Nothing Interfere! Set Aside This Evening for a Family Night at the Church. Something Provided for Each Age Group.

PROGRAM

5: 00–5: 30 o'clock.
Swimming Class for Women.
5: 30–7: 00 o'clock.
Cafeteria Supper and Fellowship Period.
7: 00–7: 55 o'clock.
Lecture and Class Period
1. How to Teach Religion. Mrs. Powell.
2. Religious Expression. Miss E. Bell.
3. Recreational Leadership. Reverend Powell.
4. Church Membership Class. Miss Raddin.
5. Girls' Chorus Club. Arthur H. Turner.
6. Geography of the World. Dr. F. W. Adams.
8: 00–8: 30 o'clock.
Worship Period.
All groups uniting in South Hall for devotional service, led by the Pastor.
8: 30–9: 00 o'clock.
World Service Program.
Presentation of World Service Program of the Methodist Episcopal Church by different organizations of the Church.
9: 00–9: 30 o'clock.
Swimming Class for Men.
9: 30–10: 00 o'clock.
Social and Recreational Hour.

FRED WINSLOW ADAMS, *Minister.*

TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH

LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

CHURCH NIGHT

SECOND SEMESTER

"WEDNESDAY NIGHT BELONGS TO THE CHURCH"

PROGRAM

5: 45 P.M. Good Supper.
Inspiring singing. Happy social time in Lower Temple. Everybody invited.

6: 45 P.M. Three Popular Classes.
1. Bible Class in Burdette Hall.
Theme: Paul the Interpreter of Christ, taught by Dr. S. E. Wise.
2. Present-Day Problems.
Topic: Outstanding Moral Problems, taught by Dr. S. B. Hudson.
3. Story-Telling Class.
Theme: The Art of Story-telling, taught by Mrs. A. Z. Drew.

7: 45 P.M. Deacons' Meeting.
Anyone desiring to join the Church is invited to meet the Pastor and Deacons at this time.

7: 50 P.M. Great Get-Together Church Prayer, Praise, and Testimony Meeting in Burdette Hall, led by the Pastor.
General Theme: "With Christ in the School of Prayer."
Special Topic: "Lord Teach Us to Pray." Scripture: Luke 11: 1–13. Questions for thought and testimony:
1. Why Did Jesus Pray?
2. When Did Jesus Pray?
3. For What Did Jesus Pray?
4. Were His Prayers Answered?

Wide-awake song service led by Howard Martin. Everybody invited.

JAMES WHITCOMB BROUGHER, *Minister.*

WALNUT STREET METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

CHILLICOTHE, OHIO

CHURCH TRAINING NIGHTS

Ten Wednesday Nights, February 2 to April 6, 1927

GENERAL PROGRAM

6: 00 P.M. Good Fellowship Supper.
Served by the Ladies' Aid.

6: 45 P.M. Popular Praise Service, with special music and devotional study.

7: 15 to 8: 05 P.M. Study Classes
Open to all who enroll.

1. Primary Picture Stories—for children 6 to 8 years of age, Leader, Miss Stone.
2. Better Americans—for boys and girls 9 to 11 years of age, Leader, Miss Haynes.
3. Land of the Minaret—for those 12 to 14 years of age, Leader, Mrs. Harmount.
4. Young Islam on Trek—for those 15, 16, and 17 years of age, Leader, Miss Enderlin.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

5. The Advancing Church—for those 18 to 24 years of age, Leader, Mr. John Linton.
6. A Methodist Church and Its Work—Study of Methodism, Leader, Professor Fortney.
7. Great Characters of the New Testament, Leader, Mr. W. A. Yaple.
8. The Advancing Church—Methodism in America, Leader, Prof. John Smith.
9. Christian Fellowship Among the Nations—Discussion of National Problems, Leader, Miss Diathea Scholl.

8: 10 to 8: 50 P.M. General Assembly and Special Feature. Each evening we will close with a cultural, social, or entertainment feature. During the course we will have among others—

PAUL RUGG, *Minister.*

MORGAN PARK METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

CHICAGO, ILL.

CHURCH NIGHT PROGRAM

Now in seventh year. Has run each year for 25 weeks, four terms of six weeks each. Climax, Jubilee Night, the 25th week. General Plan: One term before holidays—3 after.

General Schedule

Supper, 6: 00–6: 45. Devotions, 7: 30–8: 00.
Classes, 6: 45–7: 30. Entertainment, 8: 00–8: 30.

Supper

General Chairman—Three Women. Duties—Planning menus, purchasing provisions; sell the tickets and have general charge of all finances. These women do not work in the kitchen.

Sub-Chairman—One Woman. (One for each night.) Duties—Have direct charge of preparation of meals. Each sub-chairman assisted by fourteen other women. These have charge of the dining hall.

After the meal is served—cafeteria style—people bring dishes to kitchen. Other women are hired to wash dishes and clean kitchen. Paper table cloths and paper napkins are used.

Classes For Every Age

Group	Courses
Adults	Bible Study
Young People	Christian Leadership
Young People	Round-Table Topics
Camp Fire Girls	Camp Fire Lessons
Boys and Girls, 12–14	Supplemental S. S. work
Boys and Girls, 9–11	Supplemental S. S. work
Boys and Girls, 6–8	Supplemental S. S. work
Boys and Girls under 6	Story and Play.

Devotions

This period varied. This year, one devotional meeting. Pastor in charge.

Feature Program

The close of the program—last thirty minutes. Always in the nature of an entertainment. Generally furnished by different departments of the Church. Entire program completed by 8: 30.

Features for the First Term

Nov. 9, Shavers Jubilee Singers.
Nov. 16, Mr. E. R. Alderson, Picture travelogue.
Nov. 23, Mrs. Robbins' Class.
Nov. 30, Dorcas Bible Class.
Dec. 7, Primary Department of Sunday School.
Dec. 14, Christmas Party.

Attendance

Record of twenty-four weeks of actual program. First year, 172; Second year, 186; Third year, 208; Fourth year, 242; Sixth year, 315; Seventh year, first quarter, 330.

WHAT THE CHURCH NIGHT HAS DONE FOR OUR CHURCH AND WHY WE ARE FOR IT

1. Brings a spirit of great enthusiasm.
2. Gives the Church an opportunity to exercise its teaching function.
3. It attracts new people. We always have larger attendance for classes and devotions than for supper.
4. Gives the children and the young people a happy place to go where they do not need to be urged to attend. They want to come.
5. Once a week the whole Church family can come together for a great, happy night, which is filled with good things. This is of great value. Gives an opportunity to get acquainted.
6. Helps much in the program of religious education. Missionary instruction is given to a group of adults which could not be reached otherwise with this kind of instruction. The finest type of Bible study is presented.

ARTHUR D. KLONTZ, *Minister.*

CHAPTER VI

COMMUNITY NIGHT

COMMUNITY NIGHT in the country Church corresponds in many respects to Church Night in the city church. The Community Night is a gathering of the people of a community for social, intellectual, recreational, and spiritual fellowship.

The outstanding problem of the country Church is that of "serving the entire community." To meet this need a Church must show such moral, social, and religious value that the community will recognize it as a distinct asset. It must command the respect and esteem of a community. A wholesome monthly program will give the Church prestige.

With this idea of enlarged service in mind, "the Church in the community and the community in the Church," the pastor should present a monthly program, which may be held on the first Friday night of each month, beginning the first of November and continuing to the month of May. The primary object of this gathering is to furnish an instructive, interesting, and wholesome evening of entertainment and a time of social fellowship, not only for the Church constituency, but for all of the country people. This program not only fulfills this mission, but it removes the barrier between the countryside and the local Church. It also draws the people of a community toward the Church.

The pastor appoints a committee of two or three

who assist him in the making of the monthly program, which consists of readings, music—vocal or instrumental—debates, papers on various topics of interest, dialogues, playlets, or pageants. Along with this local program a feature number is advertised in the form of outside talent; such as, a speaker, pastor or layman from some outside Church, a well-known lecturer, a reader, chalk artist, violinist, or entertainer. Frequently pictures, either motion picture or stereopticon, are used with success. Only religious or educational pictures should be shown.

The evening program is always opened with a "Community Sing." Patriotic, religious, and folk songs should be used. After the "Sing" the local talent is presented in readings, music, a debate, or playlets. Next, the artist or lecturer for the evening is introduced to the audience. A social hour then follows, at the close of which refreshments are served. At times social games under personal leadership are included in the social hour.

The attendance at these monthly gatherings usually taxes the seating capacity of any country church. The efforts put forth on these Community Nights are more than compensated by the respect the Church receives from the community. People who seldom attend Church services are reached through the introduction of these monthly programs. Church attendance increases. People experience good fellowship. The wholesome entertainment offsets the unwholesome commercialized amusements which form a baneful part of almost every community.

The question is often asked, Is it difficult to procure outside talent? Usually it is not. In fact, the pro-

grams for these monthly gatherings are often scheduled for months in advance. Colleges, public organizations, Welfare and Temperance Societies, county agents, Y. M. C. A. Secretaries, school superintendents, and professional men are more than ready to tender their services in these rural communities for traveling expenses.

The following is the usual order for the Community Night program:

Community Singing, 7: 45 to 8: 00 P.M.
Local Talent, 8: 00 to 8: 25 P.M.
Outside Talent, 8: 25 to 9: 00 P.M.
Recreation and Refreshments, 9: 00 to 10: 00 P.M.

Songs for Community Night

1. It Isn't Any Trouble.
2. —— Will Shine To-Night.
3. Smiles.
4. There's a Long, Long Trail.
5. Silver Threads Among the Gold.
6. My Old Kentucky Home.
7. Keep the Home Fires Burning.
8. Swanee River.
9. Juanita.
10. Bring Back My Bonnie to Me.
11. Love's Old Sweet Song.
12. Home, Sweet Home.
13. The Star-Spangled Banner.
14. My Country 'Tis of Thee.
15. America, the Beautiful.
16. The Church in the Wildwood.
17. Let the Lower Lights Be Burning.
18. Work, for the Night Is Coming.

19. In the Garden.
20. Holy Night.

Questions for Debate on Community Night

Resolved, That men are naturally more religious than women.

Resolved, That Washington was a greater statesman than Lincoln.

Resolved, That our government should own and operate our railroads.

Resolved, That the city offers a better opportunity to youth than the country.

Resolved, That the radio is a greater detriment to church-going than the automobile.

Resolved, That capital punishment should be prohibited in this State.

Resolved, That the automobile is a detriment to the welfare of our country.

Resolved, That a town library is more desirable to this community than a gymnasium.

Resolved, That the Reciprocity Plan is the best method for solving the "overchurched" problem in the smaller communities.

Resolved, That the Church as an organization should participate in the moral, social, civic, and political reforms of the community.

CHAPTER VII

THE CHURCH FORUM

THE Church Forum has been introduced into the midweek service as a new feature. Its value has been demonstrated by the fact that many Churches now use it as a permanent part of their yearly midweek program.

Complaint has sometimes been made in the past that the pastor takes too much of the time in the prayer meeting service. This may have been only too true in many instances. The "new midweek service" seeks to avoid this condition.

To have a successful and interesting service the greatest number possible must have an opportunity to express themselves. The "Church Forum" provides for this. The "Forum" is a round table where the people are permitted to speak freely on topics of everyday life, on Bible themes, or on world problems presenting themselves for solution. The object of these open discussions is to encourage folks to express their thoughts naturally before others and to declare their faith and convictions on the important issues of life. Often no better testimonies can be found than those given at these "round-table discussions."

The chief purpose of the midweek service is to bring people into a closer relationship with God and to cause them to realize a greater responsibility for others. This aim is more nearly achieved through the "church forum" than by the "old-fashioned" prayer

meeting of the past. In the "forum" plan an effort is made to direct the thinking and emotions along lines of practical Christianity. Ask the people in the average prayer meeting or in any other public service of the church to testify or to lead in prayer, and they will hesitate and show reluctance. But, on the other hand, suggest an object of prayer or a personal need, and they will quickly respond. For example, when asking for a personal testimony, suggest that they name one thing for which they are thankful, and an answer will readily come. For discussion use such questions as, "Who has had the greatest influence for good upon my life?" "What is the greatest need of my Church?" Is the world growing better?" or "What would Jesus do if he came to my town?" Questions of this nature will stir people to new thought and action.

Jesus used the question method in teaching the disciples the great principles and truths of Christianity. By questions concerning their lives and surroundings he sought to draw them out and to make clear to them the great lesson which he wished to teach.

There are several ways in which to handle questions for discussion. When the number present is large, select a group of people to discuss the questions; have a few prepared on the topics, or confine the discussion to certain ages or groups according to the seating arrangement. Aim to have as many as possible express themselves on the questions. When the number is small, it might be well to have the questions pass from person to person, by rows of seats, thus giving all an opportunity for expression. As a rule the pastor should not speak at length on the topic until all have

spoken. After the discussion he may summarize the lesson and close the service with prayer.

No church "Forum" can be continued successfully without earnest effort on the part of the leader. The pastor must be on a constant lookout for interesting questions. He must study to understand the great problems of life. His questions for discussion should be selected from the important topics of the day. These questions should be announced from the pulpit the Sunday before or else published in the bulletin. They should also be posted on the bulletin board in the vestibule of the church. Have the "forum questions" printed in your Church folder and in the local paper.

These "Church Forum Nights" may be held weekly in the larger Churches, but it is not best to hold them too often in a small Church. Once or twice a month is sufficient in the town or village Church. Dr. Charles E. Jefferson, of New York City, recently said, "The time is coming when in all of our large city Churches the forum service will be considered not a whit less important than the Sunday school." Church Forum Nights are looked forward to with increasing interest. They double the attendance of the midweek service in a short time. They are interesting and inspiring, practical and helpful.

A number of interesting topics and forum questions have been outlined in the following pages to assist the leader in the promotion of this new department in the New Midweek Service—the Church Forum.

Forum Question:

What would Jesus do if he came to my town?

After the opening service of song and prayer, and

a Scripture lesson, the leader announces the forum question for discussion. He first tells what Jesus did when he visited the following places:

Cana of Galilee, John 2: 1-11.
Capernaum, Mark 1: 21-34.
Jerusalem, John 2: 13-22.
Sychar, John 4: 1–26.
Nazareth, Luke 4: 16–30.
Nain, Luke 7: 11–17.
Bethany, Luke 10: 38–42.
Jericho, Luke 19: 1–10.

He then asks the people to tell what they think Jesus would do if he were to come to their town. Many varied and interesting answers will be given. The question is then reversed as, "What would I do if Jesus came to my town?" Allow a sufficient number to express themselves on this personal question. The leader turns to Matthew 18: 20 and reads the passage which reveals the truth of the lesson that "Jesus is here." Voluntary prayer closes the service.

Forum Questions concerning:
When I became a Christian.
Where I became a Christian.
My greatest desire in life.

The leader first answers these three questions. Those present are then asked to answer them. After all have expressed themselves the pastor summarizes the lesson brought out by the discussion.

The average age of conversion or union with the Church is in adolescence. Contrast the age of conversion, when revivals were the principal method, with the present age. Stress the importance of early decision and union with the Church.

Many people cherish the memory of the place where they were converted. They still recall with vivid interest the old schoolhouse, the old church, or prayer at mother's knee. Use the opportunity to stress the value of personal evangelism.

The third question will naturally call forth personal testimony. Personal testimony is desirable and a means of grace. It should be encouraged in the midweek service.

The consideration of these forum questions will reveal to a considerable degree the consecration of the prayer meeting group.

Forum Questions:

Who has had the greatest influence for good upon my life?

What is the greatest blessing that has come to me from being a Christian?

As the answer to the first question will naturally be my father, or my mother, the leader will ask, "Who, aside from your parents, have had the greatest influence for good upon your life?" After a discussion on "What counts for most in life—what you say, what you do, or what you are?" the leader may speak on the value of "Unconscious Influence."

The response to question two will in many instances include the following declarations:

"A consciousness of the presence of Christ."

"The blessings of a Christian home."

"Prosperity due to Christian living."

"Christian love for others and a desire to serve."

"The fellowship of Christian people."

"To have won my Sunday school class to Christ."

"The realization of a clear conscience and a clean life."

"A desire for pure thoughts and high ideals."

The leader, in addition to his personal testimony, may give two or three illustrations on the topic.

Forum Questions:

What is a Christian?

Is the United States a Christian nation?

Can a non-Church member be a Christian?

Distinguish between the real and the imitation in Christianity. Ask the question, "What makes a Christian—Church membership, Church attendance, gifts, prayers, or testimonies?" Jesus's first requirement for discipleship was "Follow me" (Matt. 9: 9). To be a Christian is to love and obey, to trust and to follow Jesus Christ (Matt. 16: 24).

The United States was founded upon Christian principles and ideals. Many of its laws and by-laws have the stamp of the Divine upon them. At least one-half of the people of the nation profess the Christian faith. But, "Is our nation practically or theoretically Christian?" is the question.

Being a Christian and being a Church member are not identical, but there is a vital connection between the two. One may be a Christian outside of the Church. Christian and non-Christian people are found both within and without its bounds. It is natural, however, to expect to find Christians associated with and in union with the Church (Eph. 1: 22 and Col. 1: 18).

Forum Topics:

Lead us not into temptation.

I believe in the holy catholic Church.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Requests by many devout Christians for the interpretation of these topics are often received by pastors.

Topic one is translated, "Bring us not into temptation" (Weymouth). To be led indicates willingness; the word "bring" in this verse is a more accurate rendering and makes the meaning clearer.

Topic two may be given, "I believe in the universal Church" or "I believe in the holy Christian Church." The Apostles' Creed refers directly to the Church established by Christ and his apostles and does not refer specifically to the Roman Catholic Church, as such—it includes all Church communions. Read *Christian Institutions* (pages 279–294), by Alexander V. G. Allen.

Topic three reads as follows, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, thy whole soul, thy whole strength, and thy whole mind; and thy fellow man as much as thyself." (Luke 10: 27, Weymouth).

A discussion of this nature opens the way for the explanation of a number of difficult passages. However, the tactful pastor will guard against over emphasis on this form of teaching in the midweek service.

Forum Questions:

Should a Christian carry life insurance?

Should all Christians tithe?

The question of carrying life insurance is sometimes a matter of conscience with Christian people. Little doubt, however, is held in regard to the wisdom of carrying insurance on Church property, the home, household goods, automobiles, ——. Life insurance

is, like a bank account, a financial protection against accident, sickness, old age, or death; but it is on a mutual basis.

In dealing with the second question, "Should a Christian tithe?" it may be best to get an expression from those present as to who are tithers. Have several who tithe prepared to speak in defense of "Christian Stewardship." Give all an opportunity to ask questions on the subject. The leader should have a good supply of tracts and leaflets on hand to give out at the close of the service. *The Message of Stewardship*, by Ralph S. Cushman, and *Stewardship for All of Life*, by Luther E. Lovejoy, may be used as a text. Enlist your people for a "tithing band" to tithe for one month—the month including Easter. Read Malachi 3: 7–12; Luke 16: 1–13; Roman 15: 25–29; and 1 Corinthians 16: 1–4 or 2 Corinthians 8: 1–15 for your Scripture lesson.

Forum Questions:

Would Jesus join a labor union?

Would Jesus own a bank book?

Would Jesus vote for president?

Would Jesus join a Church?

These four questions should be taken together, as essentially the same principle is involved in each.

Being a carpenter by trade, Jesus would naturally be interested in the labor problem. Would Jesus join a labor union? In doing this he would be taking sides with organized labor against unorganized. Read Luke 12: 13–21; 16: 1–13.

Would Jesus own a bank book? The thought is, Would Jesus make such provision against sickness,

old age, or death? Read Matt. 6: 33; 17: 24–27; 20: 1–16.

Would Jesus vote for president? Here several issues are involved—the party, the platform, and the candidate. Would he take sides with or against men or would he assume neutrality? Read Mark 12: 13–27.

Would Jesus join a Church? What Church? Always he had respect for the Church and worshiped in it (Luke 4: 16–30). He promised that he would establish a Church (Matt. 16: 18). In the true sense Christ is the Head of the Church (Eph. 1: 22b).

Forum Questions:

What are the greatest sins of the present age?

What are the greatest problems of the Church?

It is very natural for the people of the Church to hesitate to express themselves on many of the social problems. In the past, cards, the dance, and the theater were considered three companion evils; but to-day they are accepted in the highest society. Other social problems are: immodest dress, immorality, divorce, intemperance, Sabbath desecration, and crime. No vice, no evil or sin should go unchallenged by the Christian Church. Compare the morals and ideals of the present with those of the past generations.

The Church has many problems presenting themselves for solution. Among them will be found the winning of youth to Christ, the promotion of spirituality among its members, the creation of Christian fellowship, the problem of finance and of attendance. Church attendance is most vital to the life of the Church and tends toward the solution of many other Church problems. The interest of every loyal Church

member should be solicited and concentrated effort put forth toward the solution of these important problems.

Forum Questions:

Is the end of time near?

Is the length of life fixed?

Is the world growing better?

The question "Is the end of time near?" has always occupied the mind of man. The disciples came to Jesus with this question (Matt., chap. 24). To-day many people may be found dwelling upon this thought. Some have prophesied definite times and seasons for the end of the world.

Erroneous views are often held on the question, "Is the length of life fixed?" Sometimes when a person is called by sudden death we hear the remark "his time had come." Does God fix a definite age limit for man?" Do we by our lives modify this limit? Read Psalm 90: 10.

There is considerable division of opinion in regard to the third question, "Is the world growing better?" Religious magazines at the beginning of each year have timely discussions on this subject. What moral, social, or economic reforms have taken place recently? Compare the growth of the Church of to-day with that of one hundred years ago and note the relative increase in membership. Read Isaiah 42: 4.

Forum Questions:

How should a Christian spend his Sundays?

Should the Bible be taught in the public school?

An entire period may be devoted, with profit, to each of these questions.

In preparation for question one make the following assignments:

1. A brief account of the Jewish Sabbath. Exodus 16: 21-30; 20: 8–11. Numbers 15: 32–36, Nehemiah 13: 15–22, and Jeremiah 17: 19–27.

2. A brief account of the Christian Sabbath. Matthew 12: 9–14; Mark 6: 1–6; John 5: 1–18; Acts 16: 13; 17: 2, and 18: 4.

3. Sunday Desecration.

4. Sunday observance of yesterday and to-day.

For the second question read the State law in regard to "Teaching of the Bible in the Public School." Discuss the change in public sentiment during the past twenty-five years regarding religious instruction in the public schools, high schools, Church schools, and universities. Local conditions must be considered in the discussion of this question. Send to your "State headquarters" for the law on reading and teaching the Bible in the public school.

Forum Questions:

Why go to Church?

Why unite with the Church?

Use a blackboard in connection with the discussion of question one, "Why go to Church?" Have the people bring a list of answers to the question. Compare these answers with the following list. Discuss each fully.

I go to Church from force of habit.

I go to Church as a matter of conscience.

I go to Church for Christian fellowship.

I go to Church for spiritual food.

I go to Church to enjoy the service.

I go to Church to set a good example.

I go to Church to worship God.

In answer to the second question, "Why unite with the Church?" the following is suggested:

Because the Church stands for the highest in morals and righteousness among men.

Because if no one united with the Church there would be no churches.

Because of a desire for the association of Christian people.

Because Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it.

Because it sets a good example for others.

Because of a desire for a church home.

Forum Questions:

Why are prayers not answered?

For what should we pray?

Give personal example of answered prayer.

Many prayers are not answered because the life of the individual is not right with God; because the prayers are misdirected; because there is a lack of faith in God; and because the petitions are not according to God's will. Was Jesus's prayer in Matthew 26: 39 answered? If so, how?

In teaching the disciples how to pray Jesus suggested four definite things for which we should ask (Matt. 6: 11–13). He tells the disciples they should ask for good gifts from God just as a child asks good gifts from its earthly parents (Matt. 7: 7–11). Helpful books on prayer are: *The Meaning of Prayer*, by Harry Emerson Fosdick, *Quiet Talks on Prayer*, by S. D. Gordon, *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, by Andrew Murray, and *Lord Teach Us to Pray*, by Alexander Whyte.

It is sometimes a good plan for the leader to explain the first two questions fully and then have the people express themselves on the third topic. Personal testimonies on answered prayer will prove to be very helpful. Read *The Miracle of Answered Prayer*, by J. G. Hallimond (*Christian Herald*).

Forum Questions:

What is the unpardonable sin?

Does God expect us to live a perfect life?

What was Jesus's chief requirement of those who would follow him?

Different degrees of sin are mentioned in the Bible (Matthew 10: 15; Luke 12: 47, 48). Some sins are forgiven and others are not. The following are references to unforgiven sin: Matthew 12: 31; Mark 3: 29; Acts 5: 3; 7: 51; Ephesians 4: 30; 1 John 5: 16.

These topics should be studied in connection with the second question: (1) Elements of Perfection. Matthew 19: 21; Colossians 3: 14; James 2: 22; 3: 2; 1 John 2: 5; 4: 12. (2) Perfection Demanded. Genesis 17: 1; Deuteronomy 18: 13; 1 Kings 8: 61; Matthew 5: 48; 2 Corinthians 13: 11; Ephesians 4: 13; Colossians 1: 28; 2 Timothy 3: 17; Hebrews 13: 21; James 1: 4.

A study of the interviews of inquirers with Jesus will suggest an answer to question three (Matt. 8: 18–22; 9: 9; 19: 16–22; John 3: 1–15). Jesus's teachings also answer the problem (Matt. 6: 33; 10: 37–39; 16: 24, 25; John 14: 23). Jesus's requirement for discipleship was "unconditional surrender." Are the same principles involved to-day?

Forum Questions:

What is the greatest problem of youth?

What does it cost to be a Christian?

Have the young people of the Church present and give them an opportunity to answer this question, "What is your greatest moral, social, or ethical problem?" To aid in the discussion apply the question method that was so frequently used by Jesus in teaching the disciples; as, "What is the problem?" "Why is it so?" "What are we doing to better conditions?" Suggestive material may be found in the following books: *Enemies of Youth*, by Deets Pickett (Capital Book Store, 100 Maryland Avenue N. E., Washington, D. C.) and *The Youth of To-Day in the Life of To-Morrow*, by Howard Palmer Young (The Revell Company).

In the second question the cost of discipleship may be explained by any one or all of the following passages: Matthew 4: 18–22; 16: 24–28; 19: 16–22; 19: 23–30 and John 1: 35–51. The true worth of a Christian life is measured by its cost. What, then, does it cost in terms of money, service, sacrifice, and obedience? (See 2 Sam. 24: 24.) These two forum questions are practical and should lead to open confession of Christ or a public declaration for Christian service.

Forum Questions:

What is the greatest need of my town?

What is the greatest need of my Church?

What is the greatest need of my life?

In connection with question one the thoughtful leader will consider all suggestions offered—political, social, economic, or religious. However, he will, without comment, lay aside such suggestions as he deems unwise.

In answer to question two, "What is the greatest need of my Church?" loyalty, finance, Church at-

tendance, a building program will naturally be given by the people. The discussions on the topic should be brief. The test of a Church is its service to others. Does the Church command the respect of the community? Does it exalt Christ? Does it mold character? Does it transform lives? Emphasize the teaching found in Matthew 5: 6; 6: 33.

The third question should not be announced previous to, or during the meeting, but should be held in reserve and be used only when the two preceding questions fail to bring to light the spiritual truths and lessons that the service needs.

Additional Church Forum Questions

1. What is conscience?
2. Why baptize infants?
3. Is prohibition a success?
4. Is God in the world to-day?
5. How does God answer prayer?
6. Is Protestantism declining?
7. May an honest man speculate?
8. Does God send trouble to man?
9. What must a Christian believe?
10. What must a Christian give up?
11. Can a rich man be a Christian?
12. Is the Golden Rule practicable?
13. Can a Jew be saved by his faith?
14. What does the Bible mean to you?
15. Should a Christian engage in war?
16. Is one Church as good as another?
17. What does the Church mean to you?
18. What has the Sabbath meant to you?
19. Is capital punishment justifiable?

20. Can an unbaptized person be saved?
21. Does it pay to be a Christian? Why?
22. What is the secret of a happy life?
23. Can we progress without the Church?
24. Who are thieves in the sight of God?
25. What constitutes a good Church member?
26. Are revival meetings successful to-day?
27. What does Church membership mean to you?
28. Can we still interest men in the Church?
29. How shall religion be taught in the home?
30. What is the chief business of the Church?
31. Why was Judas chosen as one of the Twelve?
32. What does the world expect of a Christian?
33. Is religion an inheritance, or an experience?
34. What influence has the Church upon your home?
35. Does our environment determine our character?
36. Will there be a permanency of the white race?
37. What must a Christian do that no one else does?
38. Has the radio taken the place of Church worship?
39. Which is more desirable—education or character?
40. At what age should children unite with the Church?
41. Is the newspaper a help or hindrance to religion?
42. What books, aside from the Bible, have helped me most?
43. What contribution am I making toward the success of my Church?
44. Should the moving pictures be used in the Church on Sunday?
45. Can the Church afford to close its doors for the Sunday evening service?

CHAPTER VIII

BIBLE STUDY

Studies in the Life of Christ

The major portion of the study of the New Testament centers about the life of Christ. All purposeful Bible study begins and ends with him. Christ holds the first place in the life of the Christian. Therefore it is quite natural that the life of Christ should occupy a foremost place in the studies of the New Midweek Service.

The four Gospels, as we have them, were produced one by one. They were written by remarkable men, each fitted for his special task. The Gospel writers wanted individually to present a true and living picture of their Master as they knew him; yet each of these Gospels, while complete in itself, presents only a partial portrait of the Christ. We need all four aspects of his divine life to get a complete idea. The four narratives taken together present this fourfold picture of Christ. Though different in style and content, they give an adequate account of his life and his divine personality and mission.

It is natural to expect that the narratives written by men of different personalities for different groups should be different in form, style, and content. Matthew the Jew writes a *didactic* gospel; Mark the Roman, a *dynamic* gospel; Luke the Greek writes a *humanitarian* gospel; while John, though a Jew by

birth, loses all marks of his nationality in his narrative and writes a *spiritual* gospel.

The evangelists were primarily compilers of their respective works. Their materials were gathered from various sources: oral and written. Mark's Gospel is the oldest. He drew his material both from the personal accounts of Peter, who was his companion, and from oral tradition. Matthew and Luke alike are indebted to Mark for much of the substance, form, and order of events in their narratives. The Gospel of John stands uniquely alone. It is so far removed from the other Gospels in form and content that it is usually called the "Fourth Gospel." The first three accounts, owing to the fact that they all agree in point of view and the main events of the life of Christ, are called the "Synoptics."

The date of the writing of the Gospels is uncertain. The majority of scholars agree that the first three narratives were written near the year 70 A.D. The Gospel of John is supposed to have been written about the year 90–100 A.D.

Fourteen lessons are outlined in this chapter for study.

Lesson I

The Birth and Infancy of Jesus

1. His Birth: His Parents; The Enrollment; Nativity.
2. His Name: When Named? Where Named? Its Meaning.
3. The Presentation: Place; Offering; Witnesses.
4. Early Visitors: The Shepherds and Magi.

What is the significance of the Incarnation?

LESSON II

His Baptism and Temptation

1. His Baptism: Time and Place. Why was Jesus baptized?
2. His Three Temptations: Place; Nature of. Why Was Jesus Tempted?

LESSON III

His First Public Works

1. First Disciples Called. John 1: 35–51.
2. First Recorded Miracle. John 2: 1–11.
3. Authority First Revealed. John 2: 13–22.
4. First Rabbinical Inquirer. John 3: 1–15.
5. First Recorded Discourse. John 4: 1–26.

When did Jesus first announce his Messiahship?

LESSON IV

Signs of Growing Opposition

1. In Judea. John 4: 43–45.
2. In Nazareth. Luke 4: 16–30.
3. In Capernaum. Mark 2: 1–22.
4. Near Capernaum. Mark 2: 23–28.
5. In Jerusalem. John 5: 1–18.

Who first publicly opposed the teachings of Jesus? What criticism did they make? Mark 2: 7, 24.

LESSON V

Training the Disciples

1. Their Call. Mark 3: 13–19.
2. Their Training: By Observation and Instruction.
3. The Sifting: Through Their Words; Works; Example.

4. The Immediate Outcome: Doubt; Betrayal; Denial.

5. The Final Outcome: The Return (the Eleven).

How many disciples were from Judea?

How many disciples were from Galilee?

Lesson VI

The Gospel of the Kingdom

1. Citizens of the Kingdom: Matt. 5: 3–16. (1) Their character; (2) Their office.

2. New Law of the Kingdom: Matt. 5: 17–48. Revision of the Old Law in respect to murder, adultery, oaths, retaliation, and exclusiveness.

3. New Life of the Kingdom: Matt. 6: 1–7: 12. (1) Without Ostentation in Giving, Praying, and Fasting; (2) Seeking True Treasure; (3) Charitable in Judgment; (4) Circumspect in Teaching; (5) Full of Faith and Good Works.

4. Sermon Summary: Matt. 7: 13–27.

Lesson VII

Parables of the Kingdom

1. Definition of a Parable. See 2 Sam. 12: 1–6.

2. The Use of the Parable. Matt. 13: 10–16.

3. Kinds of Parables.

(1) Kingdom. Matt. 13: 1–53.

(2) Evangelical. Luke, chaps. 10–20.

(3) Prophetic. Matt., chaps. 21–26.

Note number of parables by groups; when given; to whom given; and teachings.

Lesson VIII

Miracles of the Kingdom

1. Definition of a Miracle.
2. Kinds of Miracles:

(1) Those wrought on Man—physical and mental.

(2) Those wrought over Nature.

3. Methods of Healing: (1) By Touch; (2) By Command; (3) Without Means; (4) At a Distance.

Why were miracles used by Jesus? John 14: 11; 15: 24.

Are miracles wrought to-day? Give examples.

Lesson IX

Great Discourses of Jesus

Discourse on:

1. The Bread of Life. John 6: 22–40.
2. Inner Purity. Matt. 15: 1–20.
3. Humility and Forgiveness. Matt., chap. 18.
4. The Light of the World. John 8: 12–20.
5. Prayer. Luke 11: 1–13.
6. Discipleship. Luke 14: 25–35.

What was the principal theme of Jesus's early ministry?

What was the teaching of Jesus's later ministry?

Lesson X

The Master Teacher

Teachings concerning:

1. His Death. Matt. 16: 21–28.
2. Trust in God. Luke, chap. 12.
3. God's Love. Luke, chap. 15.
4. Forgiveness. Luke 17: 1–10.

5. The Inner Kingdom. Luke 17: 20–37.
6. Divorce. Matt. 19: 3–12.

When did Jesus first begin to teach concerning his death and resurrection? Matt. 16: 21.

Lesson XI

Great Journeys of Jesus

1. To Jerusalem. John 2: 13.
2. To Jerusalem. John 5: 1.
3. To Phœnicia. Mark 7: 24.
4. To Cæsarea Philippi. Mark 8: 27.
5. To Jerusalem. John 7: 10.
6. To Bethany and Jerusalem. Luke 9: 51, 52.

Why did Jesus travel so extensively?

Trace on the map the journeys of Jesus.

Lesson XII

His Last Day in the Temple

1. Ecclesiastical Opposition. Matt. 21: 23–22: 14.
2. Civil Opposition. Matt. 22: 15–23: 39.
3. The Gentile Attitude. John 12: 20–36a.
4. The Jewish Rejection of Christ. John 12: 36b–50.
5. Jesus's Last Words to the Jews. Matt., chaps. 24, 25.

(1) Destruction of Jerusalem Predicted (according to signs).

(2) The End of the World Foretold.

What are the teachings of the three parables given in Matthew 25: 1–46?

Lesson XIII

His Arrest, Trial, and Death

1. The Alleged Arrest:
(1) Cause. Mark 14: 64; Luke 23: 2.
(2) Nature of. John 18: 31; Luke 22: 52, 53.
2. The Trial:
(1) Ecclesiastical. John 18: 12–14, 19–24.
(2) Civil. Luke 23: 1–25.
3. His Death. Luke 23: 33–46.

Was the death of Jesus on the cross necessary for man's salvation?

Lesson XIV

The Resurrection of Jesus

1. Teachings on the Resurrection. Matt. 16: 21; Mark 9: 31; Luke 9: 22; John 12: 32.

2. Appearances after the Resurrection: On twelve different occasions.

3. The Significance of his Resurrection.

(1) Was it an established fact in the mind of Jesus? Matt. 20: 17–19.

(2) Was it a promise of his personal presence to his own? Matt. 26: 32.

(3) Was it the foundation stone of the faith of the early Church? Acts 2: 29–36.

Suggested Readings

Bruce, A. B., *The Training of the Twelve.*
Edersheim, Alfred, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Vols. I, II).
Farrar, Frederic W., *The Life of Christ.*
Gilbert, George H., *The Student's Life of Jesus.*

Gray, J. M. M., *The Contemporary Christ.*
Rall, Franklin Harris, *The Life of Jesus.*
Robinson, Theodore H., *The Life of Christ.*
Sandy, William, *The Life of Christ.*
Smith, David, *The Days of His Flesh.*
Smyth, J. Paterson, *The People's Life of Christ.*
Wilson, P. Whitwell, *The Christ We Forget.*

CHAPTER IX

BIBLE STUDY (CONTINUED)

Studies in the Early Church

(*The Acts of the Apostles*)

1. Title. The book of Acts has a variety of names. It is usually called the Acts of the Apostles by the majority of writers. This title, however, is too inclusive to be correct. The original twelve apostles are almost wholly ignored, except Peter and John, while more than one-half of the book is devoted to the life and works of Paul.

2. Author. Luke, the "beloved physician," is the author of the book of Acts. The writer speaks of himself in Acts 1: 1, where he refers to his former narrative. He writes of himself in the first person in the following passages: Acts 16: 10–17; 20: 5–16; 21: 1–18; 27: 1–28: 16. His companionship with Paul is here evident. In 2 Tim. 4: 11 Luke is spoken of as Paul's only companion during his imprisonment at Rome. The medical terms used in the book of Acts give additional testimony that Luke, the physician, was its author (Acts 12: 23; 13: 11; 28: 8).

3. Date. According to the majority of scholars the book was written about the year 70 A.D. It covers a period of approximately thirty-five years (30–66 A.D.).

4. Contents. The book naturally divides itself into two sections. The first section (chaps. 1–12) deals with the Jerusalem Church. The second section (chaps. 13–28) deals with the Gentile Church. Peter,

one of the twelve, naturally commands a leading place in the first section; while Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, occupies the leading place in the second part of the book. Jerusalem is the center of the Jewish Church; Antioch the center of the Gentile Church.

5. Importance. The Gospels are biographical, presenting the life and works of Christ. But the book of the Acts is historical, recording the origin, growth, and development of the Church. It is primarily a history telling of the first happenings and containing a record of the works of the disciples and the founders of the early Church. It is the *one* historical book of the New Testament.

Following are outlined fifteen lessons for practical use in the study of the text.

Lesson I

Preparatory Experiences, Acts 1: 1–26

1. Preface (1, 2).
2. The Forty Days (3–8).
3. The Ascension (9–11).
4. The Days of Waiting (12–14).
5. The Apostolate Restored (15–26).

Was the choice of Matthias according to the Divine will?

What was the fate of Judas?

Compare Acts 1: 15–20 with Matt. 27: 3–10.

Lesson II

The First Christian Sermon, Acts 2: 1–47

1. Occasion for the Sermon.

(1) Pentecost. (2) Gift of Tongues.

2. Peter's Great Sermon.

(1) The Introduction (14–16).
(2) The Scripture Lesson (17–21)
(3) Theme (The Christ) (22–36).
3. Effects of the Sermon:
(1) Conviction Manifested; Repentance Follows (37–42).
(2) The Church Officially Established (43–47).
What constituted membership in the early Church?

Lesson III

The First Christian Miracle, Acts 3: 1–26

1. The Lame Man Healed (1–10).
(1) The Circumstances (1–6).
(2) The Miracle Performed (7–10).
2. Peter's Discourse (11–26).
(1) Its theme: Christ (14).
(2) Its appeal: to repent (19).
(3) The outcome (Acts 4: 1–4).
Why did Peter and John go up to the temple at the hour of prayer?

Lesson IV

The First Christian Persecution, Acts 4: 1–31

1. The Arrest of Peter and John (1–4).
Cause: Public Preaching on the Resurrection.
2. Their Trial and Defense (5–12).
It was ecclesiastical, private, and illegal.
3. The Outcome:
(1) They were acquitted (21).
(2) The prayer meeting was established (23–31).
Does persecution foster the growth of a Church? (Matt. 5: 10).

Lesson V

The First Christian Discipline, Acts 4: 32–5: 16

1. The Occasion for Discipline (5: 1, 2).
2. The Nature of the Sin: deception and falsehood.
3. Form of Punishment; direct to each.
4. The Outcome:

(1) Godly fear came to all (11).
(2) Growth of the Church (14–16).
(3) A Second Persecution followed (17ff.).

Why did "communism" fail in the early Church?
Where is "communism" practiced to-day?

Lesson VI

The First Church Officials, Acts 6: 1–7

1. Why the Seven Deacons were chosen (2).
2. How the Seven Deacons were chosen (6).
3. Their Qualifications (3).

Why were the Grecian Jews selected in preference to the Hebrews?
Who chose the Seven Deacons?
What was the effect on the Church? (7).
How should Church officials be chosen?

Lesson VII

The First Christian Martyr, Acts 6: 8–7: 60

1. The Character of Stephen (6: 5, 8).
2. The Alleged Arrest:

(1) Accused of Blasphemy (6: 11); (2) of Irreverence (6: 13).

3. His Trial:

(1) Unfair (6: 13). (2) No Verdict (7: 57, 58).

4. His Death. (7: 55, 60).

What was the effect of the stoning of Stephen upon the Church? (Acts 8: 1–4).

LESSON VIII

The First Christian Evangelist, Acts 8: 1–40

1. Who was Philip? (Acts 6: 5).
2. His Work:
(1) Proclaiming Christ (8: 5, 35).
(2) Teaching the Scriptures (26–35).
(3) Healing (7, 13).
3. To Whom Sent:
(1) To the Samaritans (5–13).
(2) To the Ethiopian (26–40).

Where was Philip's home? (Acts 21: 8).

LESSON IX

The First Christian Missionary, Acts 9: 1–30

1. Saul's Education.
(1) Early Training at Tarsus.
(2) Later Training at Jerusalem.
2. Saul's Conversion.
(1) His Own Account (Gal. 1: 11–17).
(2) Luke's Account (Acts, chaps. 22, 26).
3. Saul's Early Travels.
(1) To Damascus (Acts 9: 2).
(2) To Arabia (Gal. 1: 17).

In what sense was Jesus persecuted when the disciples were persecuted?

LESSON X

The First Gentile Convert, Acts 10: 1–48

1. Cornelius' Vision (1–8).
2. Peter's Vision (9–16).

3. Peter's Enlightenment (17–43).
4. The Outcome (44–48).

What was the real purpose of Peter's vision? (Acts 11: 18b).

Was the purpose fully accomplished? (Acts 15: 1).

Should a Christian harbor race prejudice?

Lesson XI

The First Missionary Journey, Acts, chaps, 13, 14

1. The Missionaries: Barnabas, Paul, John Mark.
2. The Journey (to be traced on the map).
3. Distance Traveled (approximately 1,400 miles).
4. Time Occupied (nearly two years, 48–50 A.D.).
5. The Return of John Mark (13: 13b; 15: 37–39).
6. Difficulties Encountered (13: 6, 50; 14: 2).
7. Work Accomplished (14: 27).

Lesson XII

The Jerusalem Council, Acts 15: 1–35

1. Why the Council Was Called:

To reconcile the Christian Jew and the Gentile concerning the Christian doctrine of faith and the Mosaic law.

2. The Conference.

(1) The Argument of Peter (7–11).
(2) The Reasoning of Paul (15: 12; Gal. 2: 11–21).
(3) The Appeal of James (15: 13–21).
(4) The Decision (15: 22–29).
(5) The Effect at Antioch (30–35).
(6) Outcome: Peace and harmony restored within the Church.

Lesson XIII

The Second Missionary Journey, Acts 15: 36–18: 22

1. The Missionaries: Paul and Silas.
2. The Journey (to be traced on the map).
3. Distance Traveled (approximately 3,000 miles).
4. Time Occupied (about two years, 51–53 A.D.).
5. Difficulties Encountered (16: 11–40; 17: 1–34).
6. Work Accomplished:

(1) Churches strengthened (16: 5).
(2) Timothy and Luke found
(3) Letters written: 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

Lesson XIV

The Third Missionary Journey, Acts 18: 23–21: 17

1. Companions of Paul (18: 18; 19: 22, 29; 20: 4).
2. The Journey (to be traced on the map).
3. Distance Traveled (approximately 3,000 miles).
4. Time Occupied (about three years, 54–57 A.D.).
5. Opposition Encountered (19: 29, 40).
6. Work Accomplished:

(1) Miracles performed (19: 8–20).
(2) Collections made (Rom. 15: 25–29; 1 Cor. 16: 1–4).
(3) Letters written: Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans.

Lesson XV

The Last Days of Paul, Acts 21: 18–28: 31

1. Paul in Jerusalem (21: 18–23: 30).
2. Paul in Cæsarea (23: 31–26: 32).
3. Paul at Rome (27: 1–28: 31)
4. Work Accomplished:

(1) Prison Letters: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

(2) Pastoral Letters: 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus.

(3) Two years of active ministry (28: 30, 31).

Suggested Readings

Farrar, James, *The Life of Paul.*

Jackson, F. J. Foakes, *The Rise of Gentile Christianity.*

Gilbert, G. H., *The Student's Life of Paul.*

Hayes, Doremus A., *The Synoptic Gospels and the Book of Acts.*

Howson, J. S., *Life and Letters of St. Paul.*

McGiffert, A. C., *The Apostolic Age.*

Morgan, G. Campbell, *The Acts of the Apostles.*

Ramsey, William M., *St. Paul the Traveler and the Roman Citizen.*

Smith, David, *The Life and Letters of Paul.*

Slattery, C. F., *The Acts of the Apostles.*

CHAPTER X

NEW MIDWEEK PROGRAMS

Great Hymns of the Church

Preliminary to the service the people are asked to bring a written list of their favorite hymns. Two or three of these suggested hymns may be used to open the meeting. A brief talk is given by the leader on the topic, "Songs and Music of Bible Times," or "The Place and Value of Sacred Music in the Church." The people are then requested to name their favorite hymns. Great hymns of the Church are also named and their interesting origin and history reviewed.

Great Hymns: "Jesus, Lover of My Soul"; "Nearer, My God, to Thee"; "Rock of Ages"; "Abide with Me"; "My Faith Looks up to Thee"; "Lead, Kindly Light"; "Blest Be the Tie That Binds"; "Sweet Hour of Prayer"; "More Love to Thee, O Christ"; "Nearer, Still Nearer"; "I Need Thee Every Hour"; "My Jesus, I Love Thee."

Favorite Bible Selections

For this night have the people come prepared to give their favorite book, chapter, and verse of the Bible. Ask each person taking part in the service to tell why his particular book, chapter, or verse has a special meaning to him. The leader should honor each testimony and add a helpful word of comment whenever possible. This service affords a splendid opportunity to stress Bible study. The following sug-

gested list of books, chapters, and verses of the Bible was given at a Midweek Service Bible Program.

Book	Chapter	Verse
John.	John 14.	John 3: 16.
Matthew.	Ps. 23.	Ps. 23: 1.
Psalms.	Rom. 12.	Matt. 16: 24.
Ephesians.	1 Cor. 13.	John 14: 1.
Acts.	1 John 3.	Isa. 41: 10.
Revelation.	Heb. 11.	Ps. 103: 1.
1 John.	Ps. 90.	Matt: 5: 6.
Luke.	Acts 1.	Matt. 5: 8.
Colossians.	Luke 24.	Mic. 6: 8.
Proverbs.	Rom. 8.	Matt. 7: 7.
Galatians.	Ps. 27.	Isa. 40: 31.
Isaiah	Matt. 5.	Rev. 3: 20.

Great Prayers of the Bible

The purpose of this lesson is to create within the individual a consciousness of a greater need for prayer, both private and public. In the study of the following prayers one should consider (1) why they prayed, (2) for what they prayed, (3) were their prayers answered.

Secret Prayers

Jacob.....Gen. 32: 24–30
Moses.....Deut. 9: 25–29
Samuel.....1 Sam. 15: 11
Daniel.....Daniel 6: 10
Jesus.....Mark 1: 35
Peter.....Acts 10: 9
Cornelius.....Acts 10: 30

Short Prayers

Solomon.....1 Kings 3: 6–9
Elijah.....1 Kings 17: 21
Jabez.....1 Chron. 4: 10
Hezekiah.....Isaiah 38: 3
The Publican.....Luke 18: 13
Jesus.....Luke 23: 34
Stephen.....Acts 7: 60

Long Prayers

David.....2 Sam. 7: 18–29
Solomon.....1 Kings 8: 22-53
Ezra.....Ezra 9: 5–15
Daniel.....Daniel 9: 3–19
Habakkuk.....Hab. 3: 1–19
Jesus.....John 17: 1–26
Paul.....Eph. 3: 14–21

Great Chapters of the Bible

It is very natural for Christian people to have favorite chapters in the Bible. But these should not be confused with the "great chapters" which contain the basic Bible teaching and the great doctrines and lessons. A favorite chapter, however, may be a great chapter.

Those attending the service are asked to suggest (1) their favorite chapter and (2) a great chapter of the Bible. Each one is asked to tell what special meaning the great chapter he has selected has for him. The leader then writes a list of ten great chapters on the blackboard, giving a short lesson on each.

This study may be used alone; as a series of Bible studies; or in connection with the program "Favorite Bible Selections."

Great Chapters

Genesis 1.	Matthew 5.	John 14.
Exodus 20.	Luke 15.	Romans 8.
Isaiah 53.	Luke 24.	1 Cor. 13.
	Hebrews 11.	

GREAT PSALMS

In the presentation of this lesson the same plan should be followed as in the preceding lessons; that is, those attending the service are to give their choice psalm, tell why it is their choice psalm, and quote as much of it as they are able to, readily. A study of the Psalms in a series of lessons is interesting and helpful. Ten psalms are suggested. Others may be added to the list; as, Psalms 8, 24, 37, 42, 84, 119, 139, 146.

GREAT PSALMS

Psalm 1.—On Righteousness.
Psalm 19.—Creation.
Psalm 23.—The Shepherd Psalm.
Psalm 27.—On Faith.
Psalm 46.—The Refuge Psalm.
Psalm 51.—On Penitence.
Psalm 90.—Brevity of Human Life.
Psalm 91.—On Inner Peace.
Psalm 103.—Of Thanksgiving.
Psalm 121.—Of Divine Protection.

A standard text should be followed in connection with this series. *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (Chap. VII, pp. 359–391), by S. R. Driver (Charles Scribner's Sons), and *The Book of the Psalms*, by W. M. Furneaux (George H. Doran Co.), furnish excellent material.

Great Prophets of the Bible

Character study is always inviting. Have a series of lessons on the Old Testament Prophets. Make assignments on the lesson. Have one or two good textbooks available for the course. Books adapted for this study are: *Prophecy and Prophets*, also *The Prophetic Books of the Old Testament* (Vols. I and II), by Frederick Carl Eiselen (The Abingdon Press); *The Minor Prophets*, by Frederic W. Farrar (Revell Company); and *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, by George Adam Smith (The Expositor's Bible).

Various groupings of the Prophets are given; as, The Earlier or Later Prophets; The Major or Minor Prophets. However, these are often misleading. Consult *The Minor Prophets*, by Farrar (Chapter III, pp. 23–27). In presenting this series the chronological order should be kept.

Old Testament Prophets:

Moses, the Lawgiver.—First Great Hebrew Prophet.

Samuel, the Seer.—Prophet of the United Kingdom.

Elijah and Elisha.—Prophets of the Divided Kingdom.

Amos and Hosea.—Prophets of the Pre-Assyrian Period.

Isaiah and Micah.—Prophets of the Assyrian Period.

Jeremiah.—The Prophet of the Chaldean Period.

Ezekiel.—The Prophet of the Exile.

The Life of Christ in Picture

Few programs in the Church have greater appeal than this one. Best results are obtained by using the stereopticon. The story of the Life of Christ is

told briefly as the pictures are thrown upon the screen. The message each picture conveys is brought to the attention of the audience. Small "Perry Pictures" may be used as gifts. Address the Perry Picture Company, Box 58, Malden, Mass., for these prints. Helps on the lecture may be found in *Pictures that Preach*, by Charles Nelson Pace (published by the Abingdon Press).

Great Portraits of Jesus

The Sistine Madonna, Raphael.
The Boy Jesus, Hofmann.
Christ and the Rulers, Hofmann.
Christ and the Children, Plockhorst.
The Rich Young Ruler, Hofmann.
Christ Healing the Sick, Hofmann.
The Lost Sheep, Soord.
Jesus Walking on the Sea, Schwartz.
The Good Shepherd, Plockhorst.
The Transfiguration, Raphael.
The Last Supper, Da Vinci.
Christ in Gethsemane, Hofmann.
Christ before Pilate, Munkacsy.
Descent from the Cross, Rubens.
The Light of the World, Hunt.

BUILDERS OF THE CHURCH

This makes a splendid series for study at the mid-week devotions; it is also appropriate for "young people's" study in the Church Training Night classes. For a textbook use *Builders of the Church*, by Robert Leonard Tucker, and *Men of the Kingdom* series (published by the Abingdon Press).

Builders of the Church

Paul, the Leader.
Augustine, the Thinker.
Gregory, the Churchman.
Francis of Assisi, the Liberalist.
John Wycliff, the Morning Star.
William Tyndall, the Martyr.
John Calvin, the Statesman.
Martin Luther, the Builder.
John Knox, the Reformer.
John Wesley, the Preacher.
David Livingstone, the Missionary.
William Booth, the Friend.
Frances E. Willard, the Crusader.
Dwight L. Moody, the Evangelist.
Ira D. Sankey, the Singer.

Sustained interest in series is unusual. As a rule, eight or ten lessons on one general theme are sufficient. Should the interest begin to lag, change the program temporarily.

A "Spell-Down" on the Birth of Jesus

The first two chapters of Matthew and Luke are used for this study. The Spell-Down is announced several weeks before it takes place. Members and friends of the Church are asked to make a careful study for this meeting. The evening's program is opened with suitable devotions, at the close of which the leader selects two captains who choose sides and proceed according to the "old-fashioned Spell-Down."

1. How many years ago was Jesus born?
2. Where was Jesus born?
3. What were the names of his parents?

4. In what New Testament books do we find an account of his birth?

5. In what New Testament book is there an account of the Magi?

6. In what New Testament book do we have the story of the shepherds?

7. Why did Joseph and Mary come to Bethlehem?

8. What indicated their poverty?

9. How old was Jesus when he was named?

10. How long after his birth did his dedication take place?

11. Why did Joseph and Mary leave Judea?

12. Where did they go?

13. How was Joseph warned of danger?

14. What Gospels have an account of Jesus's infancy?

15. How many songs are there in Luke's Gospel?

16. Name two of the songs in Luke's Gospel.

17. How many Wise Men were there?

18. Who first visited Jesus—the Magi or the shepherds?

19. Where was the home of the Magi?

20. Why did they confer with Herod?

21. What was Herod's request to the Magi?

22. How far back does Matthew trace the ancestry of Jesus?

23. How far back does Luke trace the ancestry of Jesus?

24. Which genealogy names women in it?

25. Who was the Roman emperor when Jesus was born?

26. Who was king in Judea when Jesus was born?

27. Who was the high priest at the temple?

28. What was the name of his wife?
29. What was the name of their first son?
30. What was the name of the angel who appeared to the priest?
31. Who named Jesus?
32. How far was it from Jerusalem to Bethlehem?
33. What directed the Wise Men on their way to Jerusalem?
34. What gifts did they bring to the Christ Child?
35. What devout saint was waiting in Jerusalem for the Messiah?
36. What prophetess was also waiting for the Messiah?
37. How many miles did Joseph and Mary travel to enroll at Bethlehem?
38. Where was Joseph and Mary's home?
39. What city is called the "City of David?"
40. Which Gospel tells of the flight into Egypt?
41. Who first announced to Joseph and Mary the birth of Jesus?
42. At what season of the year was Jesus born?
43. Name two kings among Jesus's ancestry.
44. Name two women in the genealogy according to Matthew.
45. How long did Jesus live in Judea as a babe?
46. How long did Jesus live in Egypt?
47. What does "Immanuel" mean?
48. Which Gospel gives the fullest account of Jesus's birth?
49. Which Gospels are silent as to the birth of Jesus?
50. How many generations from Abraham to Jesus, according to Matthew?

A "Spell-Down" on Persons, Places, and Passage of the Bible

1. Who are the following persons?

(1) Aaron.
(2) Absalom.
(3) Andrew.
(4) Apollos.
(5) Barnabas.
(6) Belshazzar.
(7) Benjamin.
(8) Caiaphas.
(9) Caleb.
(10) Deborah.
(11) Dorcas.
(12) Elisabeth.
(13) Enoch.
(14) Festus.
(15) Gideon.
(16) Ishmael.
(17) Jezebel.
(18) Jonathan.
(19) Laban.
(20) Levi (N. T.)
(21) Lot.
(22) Mordecai.
(23) Miriam.
(24) Methuselah.
(25) Naaman.
(26) Nabal.
(27) Naomi.
(28) Nathanael.
(29) Nicodemus.
(30) Orpah.
(31) Onesimus.
(32) Pharaoh.
(33) Rachel.
(34) Rebekah.
(35) Reuben.
(36) Samuel.
(37) Stephen.
(38) Timothy.
(39) Zacharias.
(40) Zerubbabel.

2. Locate the following places:

(1) Antioch.
(2) Bethany.
(3) Bethel.
(4) Bethlehem.
(5) Babylon.
(6) Beer-sheba.
(7) Cana.
(8) Cæsarea Philippi.
(9) Capernaum.
(10) Cyprus.
(11) Damascus.
(12) Dan.
(13) Ephesus.
(14) Gaza.
(15) Haran.
(16) Hebron.

(17) Jericho.
(18) Joppa.
(19) Lebanon.
(20) Macedonia.
(21) Mt. Ararat.
(22) Mt. Carmel.
(23) Mt. Hermon.
(24) Mt. Nebo.
(25) Moab.
(26) Nazareth.
(27) Nineveh.
(28) Patmos.
(29) Perea.
(30) Philippi
(31) Rome.
(32) Sidon.
(33) Sinai.
(34) Sodom.
(35) Tarsus.
(36) Troas.
(37) Tyre.
(38) The Dead Sea.
(39) The Great Sea.
(40) The Red Sea.

3. Locate the following passages:

(1) Am I my brother's keeper?

(2) Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly . . .

(3) When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child . . .

(4) Let the day perish wherein I was born . . .

(5) As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee . . .

(6) Feed my sheep.

(7) And there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day.

(8) Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor . . .

(9) And so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

(10) Sell me this day thy birthright.

(11) Where are the nine?

(12) Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee . . .

(13) Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

(14) The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if . . .

(15) Did not our hearts burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

A "Spell-Down" on the Life of Christ

(Based on the Gospel of Matthew)

The list of questions should be posted on the church bulletin for study one or two weeks before the Spell-Down. Do not attempt to use all of the questions, but select from the list those best suited to your audience.

1. How many chapters are there in the Gospel of Matthew?
2. What was Matthew's name before his conversion?
3. What was his business?
4. What was his nationality?
5. Name three kings in Jesus's ancestry.
6. Where was Jesus born?
7. Who was king in Judea at that time?
8. Who came from the East to worship Jesus?
9. What gifts did they bring?
10. How did Herod seek to destroy the young child?
11. Where did Jesus live as a boy?
12. What New Testament prophet announced his coming?
13. What New Testament sacrament was introduced by John the Baptist?
14. Why did John desire to be baptized by Jesus?
15. What divine witness was manifested?

16. Give the three temptations of Jesus.
17. How did Jesus meet the temptations?
18. In what city did Jesus make his home?
19. Who were the first four disciples?
20. What was the theme of Jesus's preaching?
21. What made him popular during his early ministry?
22. What is the name of his first great sermon?
23. Give four of the Beatitudes.
24. What did Jesus say about the "endurance" of God's word?
25. What did Jesus teach about our enemies?
26. What did Jesus teach about giving?
27. What did Jesus teach about prayer?
28. Give the Lord's Prayer.
29. Give the Golden Rule.
30. Why did the Roman centurion seek Jesus?
31. What did Jesus say of his faith?
32. Name a miracle that revealed Jesus's power over nature.
33. What miracle revealed Jesus's power over demons?
34. What miracle revealed Jesus's power over physical infirmity?
35. What did Matthew say was the principal work of Christ?
36. What defense did Jesus make in regard to eating with sinners?
37. What impressed Jesus most when he saw the multitude?
38. How many apostles did he choose?
39. Name them.

40. What did Jesus teach about confessing him before men?

41. What question did John the Baptist ask Jesus to answer?

42. What was Jesus's answer?

43. What general invitation did Jesus give to the oppressed?

44. What did Jesus say it was lawful to do on the Sabbath?

45. What were his teachings about "our words?"

46. Name four things to which he likened the kingdom of heaven.

47. What became of John the Baptist?

48. How did Jesus feed the multitude?

49. What question did he ask his disciples at Cæsarea Philippi?

50. What answer did Peter make?

51. What did Jesus say was the real test of discipleship?

52. Finish the verse, For what is a man profited, if he shall gain . . . ?

53. On what mountain did the Transfiguration take place?

54. Who were with Jesus on the mountain?

55. Where were the other nine disciples?

56. What trouble did they have?

57. What is the basis of true greatness according to Jesus?

58. What miracle provided the tribute money?

59. What did Jesus say about stumbling blocks?

60. What did Jesus teach in regard to offenses?

61. What did Jesus teach in regard to forgiveness?

62. Why was Jesus's entry into Jerusalem called a "Triumphal Entry?"

63. How did Jesus deal with the temple traders?

64. What was Jesus's answer to the question about tribute money?

65. What was Jesus's answer to the question about the resurrection?

66. What was Jesus's answer to the question about the great commandment?

67. What was Jesus's lament over Jerusalem?

68. What was his prophecy concerning the temple?

69. How did he say he would come again?

70. What parable teaches the end of time?

71. What sacrament was instituted before Christ's death?

72. Where did Jesus and the disciples go after the Last Supper?

73. How many disciples were with him in the Garden?

74. What was Judas's bargain?

75. How much money was involved?

76. What did the disciples do when Jesus was taken?

77. Who denied acquaintance with Jesus?

78. Before whom was Jesus taken for trial?

79. How many trial scenes were there?

80. What became of Judas?

81. What urged the release of Jesus?

82. What prisoner was held by Pilate at that time?

83. Who demanded the release of Barabbas?

84. How did Pilate seek to indicate his own innocence?

85. What responsibility did the people assume?

86. What cruelty was inflicted on Jesus?
87. How did the soldiers mock Christ?
88. Who carried the cross to the hill?
89. Where was Jesus crucified?
90. Who else suffered a similar fate at the same time?
91. What challenge did the mob make to Jesus?
92. What were Jesus's last words?
93. Who requested the body of Jesus for burial?
94. What women were near the cross when Jesus died?
95. What was the conviction of the Roman centurion?
96. How did Pilate seek to protect the grave of Jesus?
97. Why did the Jewish leaders want the grave guarded?
98. Who first visited the grave after the resurrection?
99. What did they find?
100. What was Jesus's special command to his disciples at their last meeting together?

More Difficult Questions

1. At what season of the year was the Jewish Passover celebrated?
2. Why does Easter fall on different dates?
3. When did Jesus first announce his Messiahship?
4. When did he first begin to speak about his death and resurrection?
5. How many chapters are there in Matthew? in Mark? in Luke? in John?
6. Give five appearances of Jesus after the resurrection.

7. Who were the disciples that Jesus met on the Emmaus road?

8. How long did Jesus remain on earth after the resurrection?

9. Why did Jesus not appear oftener to the disciples?

10. Why did Jesus not show himself to the Jews after his death?

11. What is the meaning of the title "Son of Man"? "Son of God"?

12. What place in the history of man is to be given to Christ?

A Bible Test

1. Name ten Old Testament books.

2. Name ten New Testament books.

3. In what books of the Bible are the Ten Commandments found?

4. Tell one thing you know about Caleb, Moses, Gideon, Jacob, Samuel, Elisha, Paul.

5. Give an Old Testament verse (not in the Psalms) and locate it.

6. Give a New Testament verse and locate it.

7. Who spoke the Beatitudes? Give three of them.

8. Give the Lord's Prayer. Locate the passage.

9. Give the Golden Rule. Locate the verse.

10. Who lived earlier—Paul or John the Baptist? Samson or Moses? Elisha or Elijah? Peter or John?

11. How many Psalms are there? Which is the longest Psalm? Which is the shortest Psalm?

12. Explain the following: Jordan, Carmel, Herod, Nebo, Lazarus, Ahab, Nazareth, Dorcas, Sodom, Agrippa, Amos, Jotham, Esther, Philadelphia, Boaz.

CHAPTER XI

LETTERS FROM PROMINENT PASTORS

Central Congregational Church, Brooklyn, N. Y.

The midweek service should center around three great requirements of religion. First, the spiritual life of believers. Second, the needs of the community. Third, the call of the world, which our blessed Lord has redeemed. To serve these ends, which are one in Christ, prayer—varied by silent worship—praise, meditation, Biblical exposition, and a general temper of good will and spiritual devotion are essential. S. Parkes Cadman, *Minister*.

Linwood Presbyterian Church, Kansas City, Mo.

The most helpful prayer meeting services in my mind are those centered around the Bible study. One of the most profitable courses of Bible study is the assembling of the seven greatest Bible verses and passages in logical order on topics that have to do with the Christian life, such topics as sin, salvation, temptation, prayer, etc. The arranging of these seven Bible verses or passages should be done by the pastor leading in coöperation with the people.

Harry C. Rogers, *Minister*.

Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York City, N. Y.

The main thesis in my mind concerning the Midweek

Service is variety. I take six or seven consecutive Wednesdays and devote to them a series of Bible studies, then we use four or five for mission study; then we may take up several for the discussion of some personal religious question or for the social application of some Christian principle. We seldom have the same thing for more than four or five consecutive evenings. In this way our constituency changes, but a good many more people in the congregation become at least occasional attendants.

HENRY S. COFFIN, *Minister.*

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PORTLAND, OREGON

Our experience has been that in a downtown church the plan of having a dinner followed by a half-hour forum and then Bible study conducted by the pastor proves helpful. We find that the meeting conducted by the pastor with occasional prearranged preparation by those attending proves most successful. We find that a series of studies is best. We studied at one time Gore's *Belief in Christ* and at another time his *Belief in God.* At the present time we are having a series of studies in Psalms, selecting a group that represents varying spiritual experiences.

HAROLD L. BOWMAN, *Minister.*

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH, WASHINGTON, D. C.

The midweek service in Calvary Baptist Church is conducted along "old-fashioned" lines—by that I mean that we still adhere to the "prayer and testimony" plan. I always try to vary the order of service as much as possible. We average in this service about two hundred people, and we look forward to it as one

of the happiest services of the week. We occupy about ten minutes in brisk singing, then I ask all the strangers who are present to stand and give their name and the place from which they come. There are always from a half-dozen to fifteen or twenty strangers with us, inasmuch as Washington is full of sightseers all the time. I read a selected portion of Scripture and comment on it, my talk usually not being more than ten minutes in length. The rest of the hour I devote to the people themselves, and it is almost always very fully occupied.

I aim always to close the meeting at nine o'clock, or a very few minutes thereafter. Far from being a problem in this Church, the prayer meeting is an inspiring and helpful service, and Calvary Church would give up almost any other meeting rather than this one.

WILLIAM S. ABERNETHY, *Minister*.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, DETROIT, MICH.

The type of midweek meeting which suits one Church may not suit another. We get our best results, being a downtown Church with a membership the larger part of which live a considerable distance from the church, by a church supper at 6: 30, followed by a devotional meeting immediately, around the tables. We are able to strengthen the strictly devotional side of the meeting by the use of a good selection of choice prayers. Those who do not feel able to make a prayer of their own very often read a prayer, very much to our profit.

We also try to get general participation by asking for quotations and Scripture verses. We use a great variety of topics, sometimes following the Sunday

school lessons, sometimes studying favorite hymns, sometimes using Church leaders and interesting figures in religious history. We find in this way that we get a representative attendance and a friendly, rather informal meeting. The meetings are held around the tables, which the people seem to enjoy.

Other Churches of our type and situation are following the same method. I believe it myself to be the best device for securing family attendance and for uniting various lines of interest.

G. G. Atkins, *Minister.*

First Presbyterian Church, Oak Park, Ill.

We meet for our Midweek Service at eight o'clock on Wednesday evening. The pastor practically always leads the service. We have a good song leader, who leads in the spirited singing of various hymns, some of them new. Frequently he introduces the feature of "Favorite Hymns," selected by the members of the congregation.

I find it best, so far as our work is concerned, to follow a connected series of studies. For example, we have had two or three different series on Psalms, a series on the Lord's Prayer, a series on the Apostles' Creed. At the present we are going through the Life of Christ, using the general theme, The Great Journeys in the Life of Jesus. The events and teachings of Christ are grouped by journeys.

Frequently, after reading the Scripture lesson for the evening, I throw the meeting open for question or discussion for ten or fifteen minutes. The last twenty minutes of the time I use in speaking on the theme.

As a part of the service there is special prayer for

those who are sick or in trouble. This is in addition to the general prayer. I should say there is as much prayer in our meetings as in most Church prayer meetings and possibly more than in the usual one.

ROY E. VALE, *Minister.*

MOUNT VERNON PLACE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, BALTIMORE, MD.

This is a down-town church with its sustaining membership scattered over a city of 750,000 people. For a number of years it went along with the usual type of midweek services. Three years ago the plan of a church family night, with dinner at six o'clock, followed by a devotional service, was attempted. However, due to the character of the Church membership, this did not touch a large group of people; so last fall the midweek service was discontinued entirely, and in its place a vesper service of worship was put on in the church. The order of service is very simple. The service proper begins at ten minutes past five and closes promptly at ten minutes to six. The service is preceded by a fifteen-minute organ recital. Then follows a hymn, the prayer, a solo by one of the best soloists obtainable, then a twenty-minute address. This is distinctly a service of worship in the middle of the week and is designed to reach the business people and student groups. Its motive is to develop a spirit of worship by offering an opportunity for worship in beautiful and reverential surroundings. It has succeeded far beyond any other efforts that I have ever used in this Church or any other.

OSCAR T. OLSON, *Minister.*

CENTRAL CHURCH, CHICAGO, ILL.

My choice midweek service must, supremely, have a vitalizing spiritual atmosphere. But by spiritual atmosphere I do not mean many of the fifty-seven varieties bearing that name; rather do I mean a service wherein God in Christ, through Christian inspiration and fellowship, is transformingly experienced.

There must be literature; let it center in the Bible. There must be praise; let it be the great hymns. There must be prayer; let it be inspired by the Holy Spirit through faith in Christ. There must be a message; let it come from the mind and heart of a Christ-intoxicated messenger.

In brief, a thoroughgoing, faith-filled service of worship and fellowship prepares men and women for the individual and social task as no other method yet conceived. This type of midweek service humanizes us not only; in my judgment, it perpetually thrusts our humanity back upon the Divine Center which alone keeps our wells of humanism from running pathetically dry. FREDERICK F. SHANNON, *Minister*.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, EVANSTON, ILL.

The type of service which seems to appeal to the largest number is the one which follows a Church supper and may be subdivided into various groups applying themselves to different phases of Christian work and thought. I have used this plan with satisfying results, and it has great possibilities in certain seasons of the year, and especially for down-town Churches.

An experiment which has brought some hearty interest has been what I call "The 100 Religious Study

Club." This endeavors to secure the atmosphere and the morale of a school with definite registrations and checks on attendance; also suggesting collateral reading material and in every way seeking to bring some real religious education to the people.

Another adventure was a method used a year ago in my Church, where I brought, on successive weeks, a digest of a recent vital religious book. This has the advantage of keeping the minister's reading up to date as well as introducing the people to the best that is written in this field.

HUGH ELMER BROWN, *Minister.*

ST. MARK'S METHODIST CHURCH, DETROIT, MICH.

I have what I call a Book Prayer Meeting once a month. At that time I run an average attendance of six hundred people. I write to the publishers and ask them to coöperate with me in sending me any book that they want to give the best publicity in the world, "mouth to mouth" publicity. I give that book away to some responsible person in my meeting with the compliments of the publisher and myself, and with the understanding that the person who receives that free gift will read it and report on it at the next Book Prayer Meeting. (I often hand out as many as twenty-five books at a single prayer meeting.) The people respond to this more heartily than anything that I have ever offered in Church work. They bring back the most enthusiastic kind of reports, and that starts folks talking about the book, and then we sell them on our stands. This Book Prayer Meeting once a month is the happiest and most satisfactory midweek meeting that we have. It interests people in good

books, and it gets them to reading; and it attracts them to the meeting.[1]

WM. L. STIDGER, *Minister.*

BROADWAY TABERNACLE CHURCH, NEW YORK CITY, N. Y.

I am an enthusiastic believer in the midweek service. I always attend it and should no more think of being absent from it than I should think of being absent from my Sunday morning service.

It seems to me that in a service held in the middle of the week various things can be accomplished which cannot be so well accomplished at any other time. In my own church we hold a devotional service from eight to nine, at which we nearly always have one or more addresses, but before that service there are various study classes, a dinner for men, and another dinner for women. After the service we have a social and various committee meetings. In this way we succeed in doing a variety of business and knitting the hearts of our people more closely together.

I am inclined to think that, as a rule, if a midweek service is not successful, it is more or less because a minister does not know how to conduct it. Two things you must steadfastly avoid—monotony and scolding. CHARLES E. JEFFERSON, *Minister.*

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, SYRACUSE, N. Y.

The technique of the prayer meeting has been one of the outstanding points in my study since entering the ministry.

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[1] From *That God's House May Be Filled.* By William L. Stidger (George H. Doran Co., Publishers). Used by permission.

Just now we have hit upon something which seems to be rather promising. This is Bible Month in the calendar of our Church. We are using the prayer meetings of February for a series of debates on these four subjects:

Resolved:
That the Bible Is Untrue.
That the Bible Is Out of Date.
That the Bible Is Impracticable.
That the Bible Is Uninteresting.

In these debates, I take the affirmative, and actually muster all my experience and all the authorities I can consult, in a serious attempt to erect the strongest case possible. The prayer meeting congregations are then challenged to present contrary argument, and a verdict is rendered by a jury.

It is rather astounding to see how this comparatively simple device enlivens the discussion, and of course its possibilities are amazingly interesting.

BERNARD C. CLAUSEN, *Minister.*

TOMPKINS AVENUE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
BROOKLYN, N. Y.

The Tompkins Avenue Church has not found it of much advantage to depart largely from the customary use of the Midweek Service. The emphasis is largely devotional, gathering around the study of some passage of the Scripture. After the opening song service and the transaction of such business as may naturally come before the congregation, there is usually an expository address by the minister, followed occasionally by general discussion and a brief service of prayer and testimony. Once in two months the service is slightly

more formal, and the address more in the nature of a sermon, by way of preparation for the communion service. Once a month the Church Committee meets, following the Midweek Service, and occasionally the service on such evenings turns to the consideration of some particular phase of Church organization and work.

Once a month there is a special service in the interest of missions, frequently with a special speaker.

These Midweek Services are distinctly worth while, and contribute genuinely to the spiritual strengthening and upbuilding of the lives of those who attend and the Church as a whole.

J. Percival Huget, *Minister.*

Simpson Methodist Church, Minneapolis, Minn.

Simpson Church holds every Wednesday what we call our midweek Sabbath. Dinner is served at 6:15, for which a charge of 25 cents is made. The young people meet in one session and the older folk in another. Each has its own study and its own meeting. The average attendance of the older folk is about 100, the younger folk from 50 to 75. Occasionally we meet together for a communion service. This is announced in advance, and when the services begin at 7:00 it makes it possible for a large number who are not present for dinner to come in. We make the service, as devotional as we know how. We have found that we are able to administer the communion service much more effectively in this way because we can take more time and it becomes less mechanical. We are not hurried as we are in the larger service, and by holding it at night we have found that many people are able to

attend who could not come in otherwise. This is one of the most popular things that we have done. It means an increased attendance every time we announce it. I think that it could be repeated under almost any circumstances, and the very novelty of having it on Wednesday night in connection with the prayer service gives it additional value.

ROY L. SMITH, *Minister.*

FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH, BIRMINGHAM, ALA.

We are making an effort to make Wednesday an important day of the week in our down-town Church. Every Wednesday we have a noonday service from 12: 15 to 1: 00 o'clock. This forty-five minute service consists of a brief musical program, a brief season of prayer and a gospel message from the most attractive man we can secure. We bring every week a speaker from some prominent Church and have him hold the service at noon and also at night. We put into these two services all the attractive features possible, and give to them an especially evangelistic turn, calling upon the members of the Church to personally invite unsaved people and indifferent people to these gatherings.

Our congregations have been large, our meetings very profitable, and we are adding to the Church constantly. Men and women are influenced by these services. The Wednesday of each week has become a day looked forward to and planned for by business people, and the evenings are largely attended. At both the evening and the noonday meeting we take an offering, which is applied to the railroad fare and a

small "honorarium" for our visitor who conducts these two services. GEORGE R. STUART, *Minister.*

PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

Our method of conducting the midweek service in Plymouth Church has been very successful. We have a supper every Thursday evening at 6: 15. At 7: 00 we have a period of song and devotions, and this is followed by a variable program. Sometimes it is a series of talks by some minister, or, as recently, several discussions of Fosdick's book, *The Modern Use of the Bible.* Sometimes the meeting is more after the manner of the old-fashioned prayer meeting, and again it lends itself to the discussion of matters of the day, civic or otherwise, which relate to the activities and influence of the Church. The attendance varies; but we have usually a good attendance and often a very large one. On the whole, we find the method the one that best suits our constituency. It has the advantage of making it easy for people who have been at work through the day to eat their supper on the way home, and also, since the meeting closes usually at 8: 00 o'clock, those attending can still have the evening for other purposes.

HARRY P. DEWEY, *Minister.*

FOURTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, CHICAGO, ILL.

It seems to me that the wisest way to conduct a midweek service is to open with one or two hymns, have an opening prayer, reading of Scripture, responsive, sometimes an added selection on the part of the minister himself, an exposition of fifteen or

twenty minutes upon a scriptural theme which may build up the congregation, or at least lead to a very direct devotion, and the balance of the time in prayer. This prayer should be voluntary or selected as local conditions suggest.

In some Churches the meeting is thrown open, which often means long continued prayers on the part of those who always take part. This should be obviated. I believe there is a place for the prayer service, and Churches of life and influence depend upon it. Surely where there is a lack of the conscious need of meeting together for prayer there is something lacking in the spiritual life of the Church.

JOHN TIMOTHY STONE, *Minister*.

MADISON AVENUE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, NEW YORK CITY

This present year I have found a rather appealing program to me—a review of the books of the Bible. I have taken a book each week, giving a concise statement of the authorship, the historical background, the content and message. This has proved to be quite educational and elicits more interest than the ordinary prayer and praise program. The constructive series in my opinion is a good feature of the midweek services. It gives the people the impression that the minister is not simply an opportunist in his midweek service, but is really giving considerable thought to it.

We have a Church supper preceding the midweek service in the tea room downstairs. This has increased the attendance considerably. I utilize the hour preceding the supper from 5: 30 to 6: 30 for committee meetings of various kinds.

RALPH W. SOCKMAN, *Minister*.

THROOP AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

The best Midweek Service that we can possibly have is one which develops Christians. Of course we must have one that will bring them out to be developed. That means we must make it the best also in its attractiveness.

In order to accomplish these two things I have for years now turned the Midweek Service over to the various organizations of the Church, each one being responsible for one of the services. This creates a generous rivalry between the organizations and official Boards—which are counted as organizations. Each one tries, naturally, to have the best attendance, the best program, and the best speakers. No one can draw from another. Each must use only its own members.

To have the necessary variety I have had a study of missions one year using the Church books of that year as the basis of study. Another year I have had the study of some book of the Bible and have assigned the various chapters to each organization, making a subject to fit each week.

In all of this, these organizations conduct all the service. They usually have three on the platform, one to lead, one to read the Scriptures, and one to offer prayer. Then the other members of the organization having the meeting are pledged to take part as speakers from the floor.

In this way these Christians are developed in their spiritual natures and made ready for duties that will devolve upon them as leaders in the Church.

The practical results of this show in our Church

life. One-tenth of our Church membership can lead any kind of a meeting, speak thoughtfully on any announced theme, and approach other people in regard to the necessities of the Christian life. There never has been a service in our church, at the communion season, when some have not been received on confession of faith, and many if not most of them have been won, through the Spirit, by the members of the Church themselves.

WILLIAM CARTER, *Minister.*

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

We thoroughly believe in the old-time, old-fashioned prayer meeting in every way—with this exception. We do not believe that only a dozen people should attend them when a thousand and more people are living in the Church neighborhood.

Just five years ago our prayer meeting ran along week after week, month after month, in the same routine way with only the "faithful few" attending. It was at this time our pastor decided to build up the Midweek Meeting in attendance—to numbers that seemed almost an absurdity.

To attract so many people regularly every week, a plan, one that would not detract from or change in any way the old program, but merely enlarge on it in an intensely interesting way, was very carefully thought out by our pastor, assisted by a prominent layman of the Church.

Something of unusual merit had to be on the program—that was sure—so a male quartet composed of the most talented professional singers in Philadelphia,

all Christian men, were chosen to feature the musical part of the service.

With this quartet and our pastor, who by the way is a man capable of any service, our prayer meetings soon became "The Power House of Our Church."

We outgrew our lecture room shortly after starting in this new way, and now after five years—years in which we have all worked and coöperated with our pastor—we now have the great distinction of having "The Largest Regular Midweek Prayer Meetings in America."

An interesting musical program, hearty congregational singing, a sermon or Bible "talk" that immediately tenders helpfulness and Godly inspiration, will soon win every-member coöperation, and with these invaluable attributes any Church anywhere will be able to say, as we say, that no other service can bring such Christian privileges and blessings or advance the goodness and greatness of our Father's cherished kingdom on earth as the good old midweek prayer meeting. Ross Stover, *Minister.*

(Contributed by a layman, Horace Kircher.)

Central Christian Church, Detroit, Mich.

I am a believer in the midweek prayer service. I am an advocate of variety, method, and subject. But, whatever the theme or the character of the meeting, I would atmosphere it with prayer. At least three things are necessary in order to have a choice prayer meeting, (1) a good leader, (2) a good song director, and (3) a theme that means something to the people —something tangible and practical. Given these

three requisites, and a helpful and spirited meeting is sure to result.

In order to have interest in the prayer meeting, I occasionally devise something new and of wide interest. Just now we are having a series of midweek meetings with five addresses which I have announced as "Five Chapters in Christian Experience." Here they are as announced in our Church bulletin.

Jan. 21.—Twenty Years a "Y" Worker, Mr. W. M. Logan.

Jan. 28. Twenty Years with Uncle Sam, Dr. P. L. Prentis.

Feb. 4.—Twenty Years with the Bible, Dr. C. M. Sharpe.

Feb. 11.—Twenty Years a Business Woman, Mrs. E. M. Beck.

Feb. 18.—Twenty Years a Preacher. Dr. Edgar DeWitt Jones.

Feb. 25.—Forty Years a Prayer Meeting Attendant. Mr. Fletcher Sear.

It is my custom to preside at meetings like the above and lead for a twenty-minute devotional period, with numerous brief prayers and at least four spiritual hymns. Brevity is a virtue most everywhere, but especially at a prayer meeting.

I favor the selection of the best qualified leaders possible and the announcement of their leadership weeks ahead. A printed folder with leaders and subjects for three months is valuable. Not everybody can lead a prayer meeting. There are some ministers who are not happy in that capacity. Other things being equal, the pastor ought to lead once every month or six weeks. In some cases it would be better if the

minister preside at every meeting he attends in his own church.

Keep the prayer meeting before the Sunday congregations. Magnify it in announcement and in the consideration given it in the annual program of the Church. Cultivate variety, establish as an ideal many prayers and all of them brief. Keep the prayer meeting out of ruts by keeping it alive.

EDGAR DEWITT JONES, *Minister.*

LAKEWOOD METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, CLEVELAND, OHIO

Our plan this year for the Midweek Service is to operate a Church Night Program for a period of ten weeks. Dinner is served for thirty-five cents at 6: 30, and the entire family, including smaller children, is urged to make reservations and to be present. Following the dinner children under fifteen are excused, those under eight going at once to a supervised play room, where they are under expert care. Boys and girls from eight to fifteen have their own worship period and study hour under leadership of our deaconess. At 7: 15 a ten-minute song service begins, and an effort is made to use familiar songs in which every one can join. At 7: 25 the pastor conducts a short devotional service known as the pastor's "Fifteen Minutes." Once each month our Young People's Department assumes responsibility for this part of the program. At 7: 45 the study groups begin for all. A young people's group consists of those of the high school age and above studying dramatics and expressional activities. Another group for young married people is conducted as a forum for the study of

home problems. For this a committee provides an expert leader who presents the subject and answers questions about it. Another adult group is a mission study group under direction of the pastor. The study hour closes promptly at 8: 30. All groups are then assembled in the Church parlors for fifteen minutes of friendly greetings.

Our Church is a suburban Church in a purely residential community, so that our dinner hour must begin late to give our folks an opportunity to get to the Church after business hours. The plan as outlined above has proved successful and profitable thus far, our attendance averaging about three hundred. We are planning now to have one evening per month following the devotional period to be given over to a social hour instead of the formal group sessions, at which time a committee will arrange for games and social features to promote friendship and good fellowship. M. B. FULLER, *Minister.*

(Contributed by Mr. O. M. Walton, Executive Secretary.)

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

I take great pleasure in submitting to you below the program which resulted in increasing the attendance of our Wednesday evening meeting from two hundred to fifteen hundred and forced us to adjourn from the large lecture hall of our Church to the main auditorium.

This meeting, of which the "Question Drawer" forms the *pièce de résistance*, is known as the "Current Event Class," and the interest aroused is so keen that

it is not unusual to find several hundred persons assembled in the front of the church an hour before the door opens.

The meeting begins at 7: 30 sharp, the first fifteen minutes being devoted to an organ recital by the best available talent. At the present time our civic organist presides over the chimes and echo organ.

Precisely at 7: 40 P.M. the pastor enters the pulpit and announces the opening hymn, one of the "grand old hymns" being selected. At the close of this hymn the pastor reads the requests for prayer that have been received during the preceding week, asking the congregation to concentrate on the cases mentioned during the petition that follows.

At the close of the prayer a second hymn of the old familiar type is sung, the congregation remaining seated on this occasion in order to give the ushers a chance to seat the late comers, who always line the walls. This also affords an opportunity for the distribution of tickets of admission to the Thursday evening "Family Gathering," a night devoted entirely to entertainment, including in its program community singing, special vocal, instrumental, and dramatic numbers, and a clean, wholesome motion picture drama which has been previewed with the object of eliminating any undesirable features. Admission to this "Family Gathering" is by ticket only, the tickets being distributed at the Sunday and Wednesday services of the church.

At 8: 00 P.M. the pastor makes the announcements and explains the program of work being carried on in the Church for the benefit of the transient element, drawn from the neighboring hotels, following which

the appeal for an offering is made; these three items consuming about fifteen minutes. While the offering is being taken the organ plays softly, after which a selection based on some popular melody or folk song is rendered with variations on the chimes and echo organ.

A few additional announcements may be made, after which the pastor conducts the "Question Drawer," dealing with anywhere from twelve to twenty-one questions previously submitted by members of the Church and congregation. Matters of public interest and personal problems, political, social, moral, and religious in character, are dealt with—in fact, any question is used that is of popular interest or affords an opportunity to bring out some special point which the preacher desires to emphasize. The "Question Drawer" occupies from thirty to forty minutes, closing promptly at 9: 00 P.M.

During the singing of the hymn that follows the motion screen is adjusted, and as the last words die away the lights are turned off and two reels of film are presented. These pictures are usually of an artistic or educational nature, depicting plant life, fish, birds of radiant plumage, animal life, scenic wonders in all parts of the earth, demonstrations of scientific theories—such, for instance, as the Einstein Theory—and are always exceedingly beautiful in form and coloring. The lights being turned on, the meeting closes with the Doxology.

JAMES L. GORDON, *Minister.*

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